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The Alliance

30

Years On



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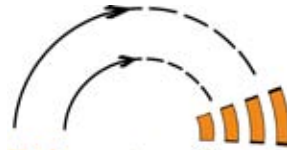
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COMMUNITY MEDIA REVIEW

Spring/Summer 2006
Volume 29, Numbers 1-2

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As the journal of the Alliance for Community Media, *Community Media Review* shall support the Alliance mission by providing: a comprehensive overview of past, present and future issues critical to the Alliance and its membership; vigorous and thoughtful debate on those issues; and a venue for members and like-minded groups to present issues critical to the Alliance.

Alliance for Communications Democracy



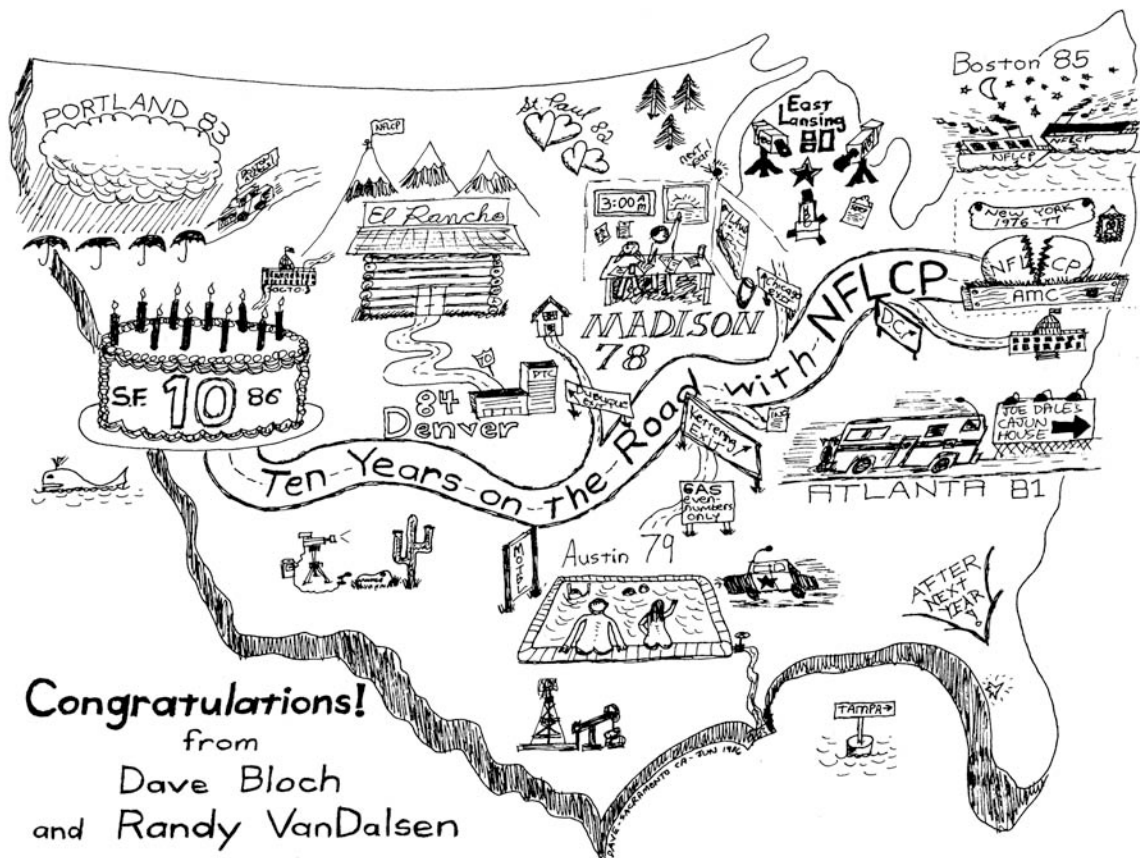
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Thirty Year Bridge

by *Anthony Riddle*

OUR VISIONARIES WERE AS DIVERSE AS THE MANY PLACES AND MOVEMENTS FROM WHICH THEY CAME, but they have all had one clear thought in common: they were brought together not to build television empires, but to build a better society.

They understood the true potential of this new technology. They prophesized all that you see before you now. None of this technology, none of the organizations, none of this community media was here, *except as a vision*. They built all of this from nothing. What seems obvious to us now is but a manifestation of vision and, just as importantly, of muscle, sweat, creativity and determination.

Our elders, many of whom walk among us, will not be named here because the people who have made contributions to this movement cannot be adequately contained on this page. But to those who came before, and those who continue, let us dedicate these words sung by *Sweet Honey in The Rock* from "Wanting Memories":

*... So, I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
Since you've gone and left me, there's been so little beauty,
but I know I saw it clearly through your eyes.
Now the world outside is such a cold and bitter place.
Here inside I have few things that will console.
And when I try to hear your voice above the storms of life,
then I remember all the things that I was told.*


*Well, I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
Yes, I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
I think on the things that made me feel so wonderful when I was young.
I think on the things that made me laugh, made me dance, made me sing.
I think on the things that made me grow into a being full of pride.
I think on these things, for they are true.*

*I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes ...*

Those who will lead this movement through the uncharted waters ahead are already here among us. We may not yet see in them more than the sparkle of a promise and the recognition of that familiar flame which has burned within each of us across these many years.

Those of us who stand on this thirty year bridge can envision what that future will be, but we cannot be there always, in the flesh. What we must all do now is to hand the youth the reins of power – not so that we can abandon the struggle, but so we can prolong it. We must present them with an image of strength, courage and faith in our principles. We must teach them all to see the beauty of the world through their own eyes.

We cannot know what tremendous change and opportunity they will face in the next thirty years, but we can leave a vision of beauty in the world as has been left for us, for them to hold when it is their turn to lead and they, too, are wanting memories.

Blessed are those who struggle ... 



Anthony Riddle is the executive director of the Alliance for Community Media.

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Looking Forward

by Mike Wassenaar

HOW DO YOU ENCOMPASS 30 years of community service, personal and institutional achievement, and societal change in 48 pages?

What you are reading in this edition of the *Community Media Review* barely scratches the surface of the significance of community media work in the United States and around the world.


That's because the significance of community media is the making of meaning in people's lives. In the last 30 years, community access television, and community media in general, have become a significant part of the lives of millions of people around the world.

I don't know if that was always the intent of the people who built these institutions. And I can say for a fact that many people who become community media practitioners don't necessarily have a

mission statement when they get started. Only a few of us wake up every morning and say, "Let's do some empowerment today." But that's the end result of the cumulative work of community media educators and practitioners in communities engaging audiences not served by the commercial mainstream.

So, as you look through this edition, think about what lies ahead for the next 30 years. One of my dreams is for every community in the U.S. that wants one to have a community media center appropriate to its needs.

Outlandish? Perhaps. But no more outlandish than the idea of the public library – a radically strange institution 150 years ago.

So look back with fondness ... and look ahead with enthusiasm. 



Mike Wassenaar is executive director of Saint Paul Neighborhood Network, and is the chair of the national board of the Alliance for Community Media.

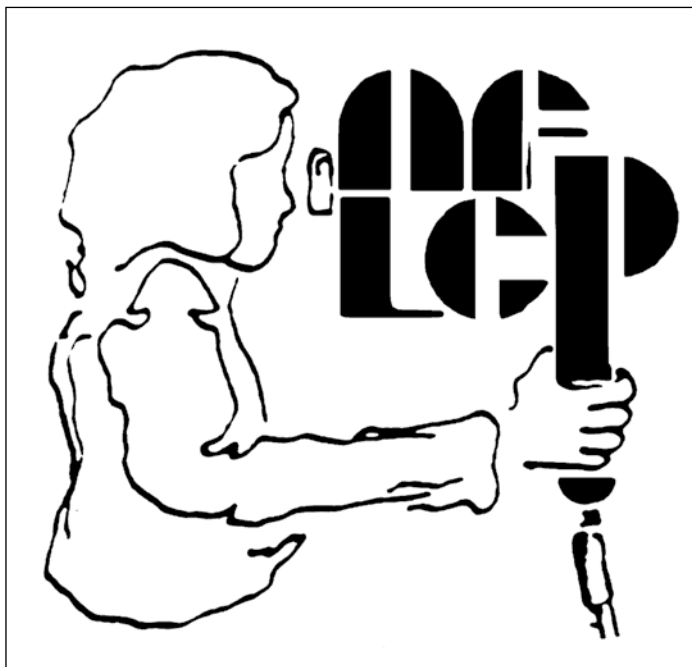
Mike can be reached at wassenaar@spnn.org

In The Beginning

Why a federation?

In July 1976, cable programmers from across the country met in New York City to discuss the possibility of an organization that would service individuals and organizations working in local cable programming. After much discussion, a common need was determined, and the group was formed, calling itself the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP). This group of programmers/producers knew that their efforts were providing vital services in their home communities and suspected that far more cable experimentation was going on than most cable regulators, communications experts, and industry advisors knew about. The question was how to inform these administrators of the nationwide, grass roots activity, while at the same time supporting groups and individuals in the field through information dissemination and conferences.

— Susan Bednarczyk,
NFLCP Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1, June/July 1977,
from "Why a Federation, A Brief History."



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"I took Driver Alliant's quotation to the local agent we trust and have dealt with for many years. He said he couldn't touch it and advised me to move my business there as soon as I could. I did and saved about 50% from what I had been paying. The fact that Driver Alliant contributes part of my premiums to the Alliance for Community Media is more than icing on the cake, it is social entrepreneurship at its best." Sam Behrend, Executive Director, Access Tucson

"Insurance for Access has been such a financial headache...until now. Finally, a company that understands our needs and provides excellent coverage at a price we can afford. We are saving over 60%...a dream come true!" Laurie Cirivello, Community Media Center of Santa Rosa

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The Alliance at 30

by *Tim Goodwin*

THIS ISSUE OF CMR is about more than 30 years as an organization; it's also about a movement, because you cannot separate the two. In the beginning, there was the movement, that time immemorial yearning for freedom of expression. For 30 years of that time, the Alliance for Community Media – or National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, as it originally called itself – has been a defender of that freedom, however it was cloaked as cable. For some in the movement it's been longer than that. Such as George Stoney, who dates his entrance to "socially relevant media" to 1946, or Sue Buske, who was part of George's and Red Burns' baby, the Alternate Media Center at New York University in the very early '70s, predecessor to the NFLCP and the Alliance.

To them and all the others who have contributed to this movement and organization since its founding in Kettering, Ohio in 1976, we can never say thanks enough. Some are still involved, still carrying the flame. They had the good wisdom in 1977 to create a publication to express our values, the latest rendition of which you hold in your hands, or in your eyes if you're reading it online, or someday, probably in your ears.

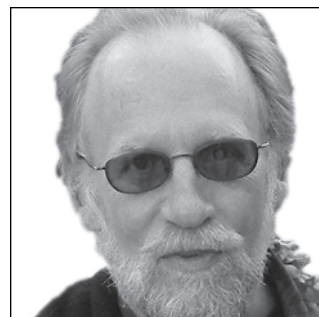
It's from those pages that I looked for content for this issue of *Community Media Review*. The articles and anecdotes

traverse the timeline of the Alliance, from its history in tidbits and reprints, to its future from the respondents who answered the call for "300 Words for the Next 30 Years." The movement and the organization are fortunate to have pioneers who have kept our values intact and us mindful of our mission.

As you read these reprints from the past, you may be struck that little seems to have changed over 30 years. The issues are much the same, just framed a little differently perhaps. It's almost as if we've been treading water since we began. But I don't want to think about where democratic media would be in this country if the Alliance and its members hadn't engaged the battle. The organization still exists, and new ones have sprouted, and the fight for freedom of communication is still enjoined.

The Alliance exists today because of some of the people you'll hear from in this issue of CMR. All of the reprints are from past CTR/CMR coverage of Alliance conferences, either keynote or award acceptance speeches, nationally and regionally. They speak to what should be to anyone who believes in democracy self-evident, but lamentably isn't.

Don't read this issue for the past; read it for the future, because the forces that confronted us then confront us today. **CMR**



Tim Goodwin was managing editor of *Community Media Review* from 1991-2005, with time out for a Peace Corps assignment in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia from 1994-97. He was founding president of the Grand Rapids Community Media Center in 1980 and has served on numerous boards and committees involved with community media in Grand Rapids, MI. He is currently on leave as treasurer of the GRMC board of directors, while he serves as interim station manager of the GRMC's community radio station, WYCE 88.1 FM. He was publisher of an alternative monthly magazine in West Michigan in the 1980s, and since 1991 has owned City Media, Inc., a desktop publishing studio. He was the 2002 recipient of the Roxie L. Cole Leadership Award from the Central States Region of the Alliance for Community Media.

Tim can be reached at goodwin@usxc.net

Did You Know?

Since *Community Media Review* debuted as the *NFLCP Newsletter* in June 1977, more than 3300 pages of information have been published in 114 editions. They are currently being scanned and converted to PDFs and text.

Smith Tells Convention-Goers, "You're Moving from a Position of Strength"

by Ralph Lee Smith

Ralph Lee Smith is the author of the seminal 1972 book *THE WIRED NATION: CABLE TV: THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS HIGHWAY*, [Harper Row, ISBN: 0060902434] that helped frame the argument for a public sphere in cable television.

[The following is the text of Ralph Lee Smith's keynote address at the 1981 National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP) National Convention in Atlanta.]

MY FIRST CONTACT with the access movement was just about 10 years ago. I was a research assistant on the Sloan Commission for Cable Communications, a very commendable effort that started too early, gave its report, and then went out of business just about the time it was needed.

As I was busy doing my research and minding my own business one afternoon there at the Sloan Commission, several people walked in who looked like they had just come off a protest line of some

kind, carrying these little cameras. They said, "May we talk to you?" I said, "Well, if you think it's worth it, I've got plenty of time."

I had an opinion of them. First of all, I knew who they were; they were access people. At the Sloan Commission we had to listen to everybody. But my opinions on this matter were fairly well-formed, and they were, I should say, quite traditional. Those people with the cameras were something new that had not penetrated very much into the consciousness even of people who were doing research in the new communications technologies. But I sat down with those people through the afternoon, and it was an afternoon I never will forget. When I walked out of that room, something had happened that could never be reversed. It was about a three-hour session, and what they told me is still very relevant to what we're trying to do, and it never can be achieved or solved.

As I look back on that day, those people were involved in a very sharp conflict, because if anybody was part of the counter-culture, they were.

Radical Software was the first publication that came out in the field. Well, they were part of that. They were involved in a conflict with people they had a natural affinity with, the counter-culture of that time. The conflict was that they adopt the technology instead of turning their back on it. It may be hard from 10 years' perspective to realize how hard it was for them to do that, to break with the people who they really understood.

I've come to realize that those people were four or five years ahead of their time in that they were applying not just technology but *appropriate technology*. That is to say (before this became a buzzword), they were adopting enough of the technology, at a level of expression that was

In The Beginning

AMC reports on intern program

"Formation of the Federation is perhaps the prime result of the four-year program [Alternate Media Center]," said George C. Stoney, NYU School of the Arts professor and designer of the internship program. "When we started in 1972, I hoped that our interns would be absorbed by the cable companies into management positions where they could influence public access policy. I did not anticipate that in a period of economic stress, management would regard community programming as a potential threat. Fortunately, a good number of the interns had the ability to survive and have made a place for themselves in such independent access organizations as Grassroots in Aspen, Colorado and YCAT in York, Pennsylvania."

The best kind of organization in the future, he suggested, may be to permit citizens the greatest amount of control in exchange for their assuming economic responsibility and, at the same time on a matching basis, to require the cable operators, in exchange for their exclusive franchise, to provide both access to cable time and funds for equipment and personnel.

—from *NFLCP Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 5, April/May 1978



just adequate to do the job and no more, to achieve what they wanted to achieve. It seems to me that they were way ahead of their time ... immensely insightful.

They explained to me that this new television that they were going to create, and were busy creating, was, as they said, a voice for the voiceless. And those words are so much worth remembering.

In our pinnacle of success, whether we're going uphill, downhill, or sideways at this point, we have to ask ourselves just how successful we've been. I would say that we have achieved some success, but reaching the voiceless always has to be a purpose of this movement and a purpose of the people who are in it.

When it comes to what has been achieved in the 10 years since then, it seems to me that the clear and overwhelming achievement is that people have become accustomed to an expanded notion of what television is, a notion that really didn't exist 10 years ago. We've created a change in their personal relationship to it.

I think these changes are, first of all, irreversible – that this has been done and things will never go back to the way they were. But more important is the establishment you'd taken on in attempting to achieve these changes. I think the people who didn't want this to happen are indeed the blue book of "Who's Who" in American communication. I can assure you that, compared to some of the people who have tried to take on the American communications establishment and have lost, that you must indeed look like a bunch of raggle-taggle gypsies. But indeed you did it, and they didn't.

Now with this tremendous achievement having in fact come to pass, I want to talk about several problem areas that I think make the future uncertain. What will never change is the change in attitude you have achieved, but in the position that we all stand in now, we are certainly not very secure. And I want to cite three problems for you to reflect on, to think on, and when it comes to problem number three, I hope people will think very actively about doing something about it.

Problem number one is that, in my

opinion, there is not a satisfactory relationship, as a whole, between the access movement and the cable industry. My perspective on this matter comes from consulting with private firms in the cable industry in my role as a community ascertainment person.

I think that the NFLCP, and those of you who are individually involved, might take much more seriously the question of trying to reach more fully more people – especially at the higher levels of the cable television industry – with information about what you're doing, what impact it's having, and why it's important. The problem is that the industry is very new to the concept that they have to live with you at all.

In 1974, when the pinch was on in the cable industry – if the banks hadn't bailed them out, they would have gone under – you were expendable. A lot of access was simply discontinued. The situation now is that within the past three or four years the industry has come to understand that you are, in some fashion, an integral part of what they're trying to do. But it hasn't been a relationship that grew naturally, or that grew evenly with the growth of cable. The result of that is that there are many executives in the cable industry who look upon access as the way you get a franchise. You gotta build it in because that's what all the cities want, so forth and so on.

Let me tell you at least two of the dangers that I see in this: The first is that if you are not committed to access as a natural conviction, then it is easy to believe that you should eliminate it when things get tough. It's not in your heart;

In The Beginning

NFLCP's original statement of purpose

Prompted by an increasing need to expand public access rights (e.g., Communications Act of 1934, CATV rulings and regulations), the NFLCP was organized in 1976 to help meet the communications needs of people on a local community level.

The goals of the organization are to preserve people's access rights, to improve access conditions, and to achieve active citizen participation in the media. To this end we are committed to contacting and incorporating all those dedicated to these principles on a non-discriminatory basis and to seeking out minority and other special interest groups whose communication needs might otherwise be overlooked. We are pledged to uphold the inherent right of each citizen to information via all media.

It is our hope to achieve these goals by serving as a center for the collection and dissemination of pertinent information; by engaging in advocacy efforts on local, regional, and national levels; and by providing support to those who seek to make information and media use more accessible to all people.

— *from CTR, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 1986*

you did it because you had to do it. The second thing is that there may be parties in the industry who are thinking to themselves, "Well, I tell you what we're going to do. We're going to offer 10 or 12 channels and we're going to see if they're used. So we open up channel number one and we see if it's used. Then we open up channel number two and you know, I wouldn't be surprised if, by the time we get to number three, it's not going to be used very much. And I want to see the judge who's going to force us to give back those channels if they're not being used."

What I mean is that there are people in this business who do not expect that they're going to have to deliver what

they're promising. It's the worst possible footing to try to create a permanent relationship that will cause growth of the community programming movement in the United States as a natural part of the new communications technology. So there's problem number one.

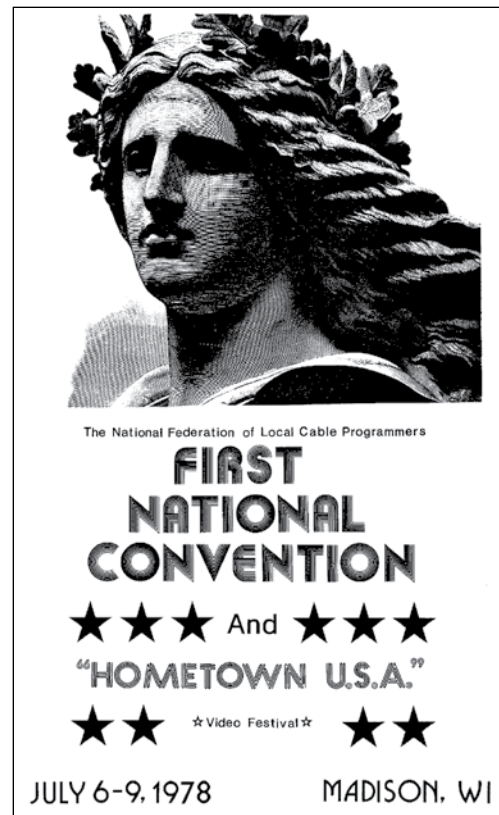
Problem number two is that, in my opinion, the interface between all this technology and the educational sector is far too imperfect. I think the most important cause of this is that it is not habitual for educators to operate together on matters relating to the substance of education and how it's conducted. When it comes to lobbying for grants, lobbying for federal funds, they've got their act together. But

In The Beginning

NFLCP First National Convention Madison, WI, July 6-9, 1978

The NFLCP is presenting this First National Convention to address a number of common concerns that have emerged from the regional conferences. Issues such as "the public's legal access rights," "audience analysis and development," "community access center organization and funding," and "program production techniques" will be addressed. The convention will give video programmers and artists the opportunity to develop contacts, share their works, explore new and developing distribution channels, and become part of a national support system.

The workshop sessions will be led by people who have firsthand experience, valuable insights, and pertinent information to share. Among the topics to be considered in the sessions will be: "Developing a Community Access Center"; "Video Art"; "Working with the FCC"; "Educational Access Projects"; "Working with PBS Stations"; "Minority Programming"; "Satellite Projects"; "Promotion and Press Relations – Getting the News Out"; "Municipal Access Development"; "Set Design for the Small Studio"; "1001 Ways to Fund Your Project"; "Libraries and Cable"; "Grant Writing Techniques". We expect to have representatives from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Federal Communications Commission, the Public Broadcasting Service, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and many other federal, state, and local officials interested in the application and potential of access programming.



— *from the original convention poster*

when it comes to how you educate, and if you should do this, and so forth, there is great disarray on individual campuses, to say nothing about great disarray at the national level, with regard to a sense of purpose in having a greater relationship between higher education and the new technologies.

I know very few people personally who can get much educational material by television at this point. For those who hanker for education, for myself who wanted to take a few graduate courses, it's virtually impossible to get anything on television that will accommodate us.

We need to push the cities hard on this point, to say telecourses, as an example, are a very desirable thing and to push the educators in those cities to get their act together. The result being, hopefully, a real plan to which the bidders could commit real money, real effort, and real personnel.

The third thing I want to talk to you about tonight is access.

In April of 1981, the National Cable Television Association (NCTA) submitted a paper to Senator Packwood of the Senate Commerce Committee. The paper is called *Cable Television: Government Regulation and the First Amendment*. The crux of the argument in this paper is that a cable television company is really just an electronic newspaper. It is not a broadcaster in the sense that we understand television broadcasting in the United States. Rather, we should look at it as the columns of a newspaper corresponding to the channels of a cable system.

Now, if anything is accepted in the jurisprudence of the United States it is that the government will not tell the editor of a newspaper what columns his newspaper will carry, what purposes they will be devoted to, and what will be in those columns.

If this argument holds, and if it is ultimately decided that a cable operator falls into this legal category, no government can tell him there has to be an access channel. No government can tell him that he must make space available for community programming, for local access, for education, for anything else. He is protected by the

First Amendment to the Constitution.

The comment I want to make on this immediately is that this is one of the most beautiful examples of the way that new technologies are scrambling our traditional concepts of what ought to be. The second thing I want to say is that I don't intrinsically regard the argument as frivolous. I want to take you through it tonight, and I want to tell you what my thoughts are as to the probable consequences of the argument.

With the NCTA as our guide, let's go through this matter. They state first that the best legal analogy for a cable television system is that of a newspaper.

Our reply to them would be, I suppose, well look, you're different from a newspaper; you're a monopoly. You're the only cable operator in town. You haven't got a right to claim that the government can't say anything about the content of your system. Well, they respond, "The factual premise of a cable monopoly over information services is false in both an economic and information sense, unless the relevant market is defined somewhat tautologically as provision of cable service."

"In our information laden society, however, cable is just one of many sources of news, information, and entertainment." Think of that. "In the near future, introduction of satellite broadcast direct to homes and the approval of low-power terrestrial broadcast stations promise to make the home video market even more competitive



George Stoney [r] sometime in the '70s.

About Pioneers

"Whatever one may think about the present posture of the cable industry toward public access, I want to acknowledge that we would never have been able to test the concept as we did, in places where there was high cable penetration, without the help of people like Earl Hait, manager of ATC's system in Reading, PA and others of his persuasion who shared our vision about the possibilities of access.

"One can't use the 'vision' in this context without mentioning Ralph Lee Smith, whose book *THE WIRED NATION* kept our heads spinning. There was also Rev. Everett Parker, the undaunted head of the Office of Communications of the United Church of Christ, who rallied church folks all over the country to the cause of access with his workshops and with his pamphlet, *A Citizen's Guide to Cable Television*.

"Finally, there was Nicolas Johnson, the only person on the Federal Communications Commission who would lift his eyes from the minutia of over-the-air broadcast regulation to recognize that a new and potentially important force called cable TV was entering the field ... Johnson not only persuaded the FCC's engineers that our Porta-Pak tapes were good enough to be carried on cable, he persuaded the FCC to issue an order requiring cable systems to offer public access channels."

— excerpted from
"Public Access: A Word About Pioneers"
 by George Stoney,
 from *CTR*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 1986

than it is today.” That’s their answer to that one.

The National League of Cities has proclaimed three reasons why cities should be able to regulate cable. One of them is that cable television uses the public rights-of-way. Second, that it has a geographic monopoly, and third, that it provides important public services.

The NCTA puts this through its grinder and does a pretty good job on it. First, it asks if it is a fact that the use of the public rights-of-way permits such extensive regulation of any entity that uses them. Is that an adequate rationale? Certainly, it’s an adequate rationale for regulating how the wire hangs on the poles and that kind of stuff, but what about public access and things like that? For example, the fact that a newspaper delivery truck uses the streets of a city, does that give the city the

right to regulate the content of the newspaper? I don’t think it does.

Second, a cable operator has a geographic monopoly. Well, as you know, we just disposed of that; of course cable is not a monopoly.

Third, cable provides important public services. Our friends really fire a shot at that one. “It would not be acceptable,” they say, “and is not acceptable with regard to cable to exercise such authority, simply because it is not a legitimate role of government to regulate speech for socially beneficial purposes.” How’s that for a shot? Beneficial, yes, they’ll grant you that; you people are beneficial, but that’s beside the point.

It is clearly established in American law that you cannot waive your First Amendment right, especially to secure certain economic advantage. The NCTA says here, “The contractual element in local franchises suggests that the successful bidder has done nothing more than agree to limit his constitutional rights. He is re-

stricting his speech as part of a contract in exchange for valuable consideration. This reasoning, however, is inconsistent with a long line of Supreme Court cases holding that the receipt of public benefits may not be conditioned on the waiver of constitutional rights, particularly First Amendment rights.”

I am surprised by the NCTA saying such glowing things about their commitment to access and how important it is to their scheme of what modern communications will be in urban centers, etc., and simultaneously saying to Senator Packwood, we believe these rights should be cancelled. I’m really surprised!

I want to suggest what the approach to all of these arguments should be. We have to go back to square one on this and the purposes for which the Communications Act of 1934 was established.

Its rationales were two in number. The first comes from the Preamble: the Federal Communications Commission will be established by this Act, the Preamble says, for the purpose of regulating interstate and foreign commerce and communication by wire and radio, so as to make available, so far as possible to all people of the United States, a rapid, efficient, nationwide and worldwide wire and radio communications service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges. Purpose number one: an efficient system of national communications at the lowest possible cost.

Purpose number two is the promotion of localism. It appears throughout the Act, but it is probably best stated by the President’s 1968 Task Force on Communications Policy: “No aspect of communications policy is more important than measures or arrangements which would permit or encourage the growth of communications of all kinds within the localities, the discussion of local issues, contact with local or regional political leaders, tapping of local talent, the use of local resources in education, technologies, sports, and the expression of all kinds of local interests.” I don’t know if you ever saw those words or not, but I can’t imagine a better description of the local programming and access movement in the United States.

In The Beginning

Hometown USA debuts featuring “video and super 8”

“Hometown grew out of three concerns expressed by independent video and filmmakers and public access programmers: the need for a representative example of contemporary software for use on public access channels; the need to facilitate community use of CATV for social change; and the need to illustrate the ‘state of the art’ of independent programming on a national scale.”

— *from NFLCP Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 1, September 1978*

The fact is that what you are doing is squarely grounded on one of the two major goals of the communications policy of the United States. You need not feel that you must run and hide when the squirrel guns come out. You are right where it's at, and your position moves immediately from a position of strength.

In 1970, I wrote in *THE WIRED NATION* that cable should be legislated as a common carrier and that the person who owns the facilities should not have any right to program it. There is no medicine more bitter than that to the present-day cable operator.

What the operator wants is the profits from owning the wire and the profits from the programming, which, in the funny way we do things in this country, we've decided to let the cable industry have, despite a good deal of advice that maybe it wasn't wise. We have been tolerant, in effect, but there's nothing in the First Amendment, and there's nothing in the Constitution of the United States, and there's nothing in the Communications Act of 1934 that would prevent the structure of cable from being notably different and the operator removed from control over part or all of his programming.

The proper response to the fact that these people mean business is to play hard ball. I think that any further steps by the NCTA to place access in jeopardy should be met with counterproposals that at least part of the capacity of all cable systems should be mandated as not being

under the control of the cable operator, in one form or other of access, leased access, guaranteed access or any arrangement that has the effect of common carrier.

Whether or not this confrontation will occur is an interesting question. We're dealing with a conservative federal administration at this point, which might be friendly to the maximum profit advantage of a cable operator. On the other hand, I want to tell you that you have a lot of friends; you don't have to feel alone on this at all. And you have several blocs of interest groups who would be powerful allies, and I think the time has come to recruit them.

The point is that it is afoot in serious fashion, and to get yourselves together. It is an important priority for the NFLCP to study the counter position, to reflect on how seriously one wants to try to restructure the mandate of this industry so as to find, in one way or another, a guaranteed position for community usage and community access, and, most of all, just to realize that, for better or for worse, all us idealists (and I hope I can be counted in that category) have gotten ourselves into a real professional baseball game and I don't mean maybe. And the way you play professional baseball is that you're good, that's all. And we have to be as good as we can.

The fact is that what you are doing is squarely grounded on one of two major goals of the communications policy of the United States. **cMR**

— reprinted from *CTR*,
Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1981



Lest We Forget

Good ethics

"It has not been easy to maintain good ethics. The constant example of the broadcast media, with their hunger for violence and controversy, makes it difficult to remember there are other ways of doing things. The hardest thing for me, right now, is that no one is speaking out in horror at the poverty and hunger and powerlessness in our own countries, no one is crying out that we cannot be a just nation when we silently accept so much injustice, here and in the rest of the world. There is so much money for war, and so little to feed and educate the children of this world. Our countries cry 'poor,' but they have never been richer. Where do we start? I hear so little, yet I know I am not alone with my concerns.

"Or am I wrong? Are there many voices speaking out ... and being filtered out of the public media, or given their brief five minutes, isolated in their little corners, and silenced? It seems to me that we need more than ever to hear many voices in the land. We silence them at our peril."

— excerpted from *Dorothy Todd Hénaut*,
Visual Anthropology Review,
Vol. 7, No. 2, Fall, 1991

Making Telecommunications Ready for Democracy

by *Diana Peck*

Diana Peck was the recipient of the George Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications in 1984. She served as chair of the NFLCP board of directors from 1981 to 1983.

[The following is an excerpt from Diana Peck's acceptance address for the Stoney Award at the 1984 NFLCP National Convention in Denver. Her words are as relevant today as they were 22 years ago.]

Did You Know?

In 1976, **Alternate Media Center** interns formed a steering committee: Sue Miller Buske, David Hoke, Jean Rice, Ann McIntosh, Susan Bednarczyk, Mickey Brandt, Nancy Jesuale, and Michael Aronson. Mickey Brandt and Michael Aronson came up with a name: The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. Programmers from the northeast region, initially contacted by Ann McIntosh, turned up in Cambridge [MA], gave the NFLCP idea the go ahead, and drafted the first NFLCP philosophy statement.

240 people attended the first NFLCP Convention in Madison, Wisconsin in 1978; **George Stoney** delivered the keynote address and received the first Award for Humanistic Communications.

—from *CTR*, Vol. 9, No. 2,
Summer 1986

I WAS READING RECENTLY in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that a local group of medical researchers in Atlanta's Centers for Disease Control had isolated a new virus, *governmentus ridiculitis*, which causes a virulent disease local to the Washington, D.C. area. We know it more commonly as deregulation fever. It is known to afflict particularly actors from California and no cure has yet been found.

Congress appears to have caught the bug. The Senate has passed S66, a bill whose purpose is to deregulate cable television. The House, while less afflicted with the fever, is working on HR4103, which proposes some deregulatory steps. The Supreme Court has also caught the bug. First there was the *Boulder* decision, which challenged the authority of local governments to regulate cable. Then there was the recent Oklahoma decision [*Crisp*], which ruled that states do not have jurisdiction over a cable operator's content. And finally, there's a hotbed of activity for the incubation of deregulation fever at the executive branch of government, represented by the FCC.

In Congress, in the Supreme Court, and at the FCC, we see a pattern of deregulation, in particular a pattern of removing regulatory authority from the state and local levels and placing it on the federal level where deregulation can proceed. And to justify this deregulation, they argue simplistically that the new television technologies supply us with more channels and that more channels automatically mean more diversity. More channels does not mean diversity if the same

programming suppliers monopolize all delivery systems.

Many access programmers are aware of the old analogy that access channels are really the electronic parkland of the USA. The territory of American television has (except for public television) been carved up into privately-owned land. The people who have small lots, for the most part, sold out to the bigger landowners, so that the media conglomerates now own huge tracts of this territory. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the FCC was giving away the land, they set some aside for the public in the form of public television. But even that land is not accessible to the public anymore as users. Only the access channels provide a place where people can use – not just look at – this great public resource. With deregulation, the landowners are likely to get more powerful, while the small enclaves of parkland – that's us – struggle to maintain themselves.

How many people realize that the Equal Time Rule and the Fairness Doctrine are on the verge of being eliminated? How many people understand the implications? How many people understand the importance of having access channels and localism in programming? How many people understand how fragile local programming is? We know that the answer is NOT MANY. I suspect that we in this room represent about 10 percent of all the people in the country who really understand these issues. Telecommunication issues are not only new, they are extremely complex. But we have not done our job of informing the American public about their importance.

What disturbs me so greatly is not so much that deregulation is going on, but rather that it is going on SO QUIETLY.

When James Watt gave away mineral rights in wilderness areas, millions of environmentalists all over the country were

outraged and Washington heard about it! If Mark Fowler (then chair of the FCC) gives away the Fairness Doctrine, Washington will probably hear from a handful of public interest advocates, such as the United Church of Christ, the Media Access Project, and the Telecommunications Research and Action Center, and maybe a few interested individuals. If we lose our access to deregulation, will Washington hear a great hue and cry from the American public? Of course not. And yet when an access channel is taken away from the public, it is no different than when the public loses any other publicly-owned resource.

But how do we tell people what they are losing? How do we assign a value to an access channel? Is it like losing 10 acres of land? Or 10 thousand acres of land? Or 10 million acres of land? We cannot measure access by walking off its boundaries the way we can measure land. We can't even measure the use of access channels the way we measure the use of parkland because the majority of those who benefit from access are the audience. And most of all, we cannot measure the impact of the loss of access for future generations. When parkland is destroyed by strip mining or condominiums, we see what our children and grandchildren won't have.

If access disappears, there will simply be one more channel of national programming to fill in the space.

We know that, without access, we will not have a communications democracy. We will have an autocracy ruled by the media corporations. We, therefore, must be the preservers of that democracy. We must be the Continental Army of the revolution of the communications democracy. We must continue our work showing people what it means to have democracy – the voice of the people – on television. We are the ones who have to file comments with the FCC on their proposed weakening of the Fairness Doctrine. We are the ones who have to educate our Congressmen about the impact of the pending cable legislation and support those members of the House who are holding the line against deregulation. We are the ones who have to write letters to the editors of our newspapers when the Supreme Court rules in favor of more rights for broadcasters. And we are the ones who have to stop Senator Packwood's drive to guarantee full First Amendment freedoms for broadcasters at the expense of the First Amendment freedoms of the American public.

If we don't do it, no one else will. **cMr**

— reprinted from
CTR, Vol. 7, No. 2/3,
Summer/Fall 1984



About Pioneers

"I'm sometimes referred to as 'the father of public access' or, more often these days, 'the grandfather of access.' Well, I'm certainly not ashamed of the ascription and, as any good lawyer will tell you, paternity is easy to ascribe and difficult to disprove. I do know there were a lot of people who were already talking about the idea back in the late 1960s when I first became excited about access..."

"What we all lacked in those heady first days of access was any clear notion about the kind of organizational support it would take to keep programs going over the long haul. In 1971, Red Burns joined me in a proposal to the Markle Foundation. We proposed to set up a center where field tests could be made. For the next half dozen years, the Alternate Media Center at New York University sent out access organizers to such far-flung places as Reading, PA; Bakersfield, CA; DeKalb, IL; Orlando, FL; and more. We also moved into areas of Manhattan as they were wired."



George Stoney, 2005.

— excerpted from "Public Access: A Word About Pioneers"
by George Stoney,
from CTR, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 1986

Koning Receives Buske Leadership Award

by Dirk Koning



Dirk Koning was the first executive director and visionary of the Grand Rapids Community Media Center, guiding this national model of media access from 1981 until his death in 2005 at 48 from complications of corrective heart surgery. He was for 14 of those years, chair of *Community Media Review's* editorial board.

He spoke and wrote extensively on community media issues both here and abroad. Among his many awards were both the Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications [2001] and the Buske Leadership Award [1989] from the Alliance for Community Media.

[The following is the text of Dirk Koning's acceptance address for the Buske Leadership Award at the 1989 NFLCP National Convention in Dallas.]

IAM HONORED AND HUMBLLED by this award from friends and colleagues, many of whom are certainly more qualified to receive it than I. I am glad it carries the name of Sue Buske, whom I've worked with for 10 years. Sue has spent more time and energy developing community television than anyone in this country.

She has helped launch hundreds of operations, counseled scores, and even saved a few. I've seen her work effectively one-on-one in Grand Rapids and one-to-hundreds in Marne La Valle, France last year. Thank you, Sue.

It is hard for me to accept a leadership award when I feel like such a follower. I have researched, read and studied many philosophies and styles from others. Most of you here are leaders ... pioneers in this electronic evolution of free speech and individual rights. I have followed many of you, and hope to continue to listen and learn from you and with you.

I traced the origin of a couple key words the other day and was pleasantly surprised. Community and communication are similar derivatives from a Latin-based word meaning to share. Communicate, share, to partake or enjoy with others.

This is what I like most about access and its people. You're not out there try-

ing to accumulate profits ... you're trying to share benefits with your community ... you're not trying to withhold information to your advantage ... you're sharing knowledge through community classes in visual literacy ... you're not trying to acquire the competition ... you're empowering the disenfranchised ... you're not testing the market to see what it will bear ... you're infusing it with the tools of technology. You must not underestimate your value in this post-industrial information era. Communication is a commodity ... information is the currency of democracy. Don't be short-sighted and hitch your wagon to the cable star. Cable may prove to be the current communications equivalent of the Pony Express and you've invested heavily in relay station stables.

Expand your vision of your access center to include access to all kinds of information: access to radio; access to computers, desktop publishing, printing; access to bulletin boards, data banks, community fax – access in its broadest definition. Think about leading the way in community communications by establishing a user-friendly and affordable infrastructure to bridge the gap between the information-rich and information-poor in your community.

Keep your channels clear of the ever-infiltrating static of censorship. How do you suppose access TV would be received and used in China? ... or Poland? ... or Central America? ... or South Africa? We

Did You Know?

In Spring 1992, NFLCP members submitted nearly 100 suggestions for renaming the organization. The responses came as part of a survey developed by the "New Name Task Force," a group formed at the NFLCP's 1991 national conference and charged with "developing a process,

and making a recommendation, for changing the name of the organization." Members of the task force were Mike Henry, Dirk Koning, Kari Peterson, Dorothy Thigpen, and Paula Manley, chair.

— from *CTR*, Vol. 15, No. 2, March/April 1992

must continually guard against majority opinion usurping the rights of the minority. Remember, much of the Constitution and most of the Bill of Rights was drafted to protect minority rights. Democracy allows for majority rule, but not at the expense of the rights of the individual, especially as it pertains to religion and speech.

America had a torrid tradition toward tolerance. Tolerance defined: to recognize and respect others' beliefs and practices without necessarily agreeing or sympathizing. But tolerance waxes and wanes like the moon. In America, tolerance is

waning. Whether you want to be or not, you in access are at the forefront of the fusion of tradition and technology. We are being called upon to defend speech principles over personal preferences.

Knowledge begets understanding ... understanding begets tolerance ... tolerance begets peaceful co-existence. Keep learning, keep teaching, keep defending, keep tolerating and keep peace close to your heart. You have the knowledge, the technology and tolerance ... please continue to share.

Thank you very, very much. **CMR**

— reprinted from CTR,
Vol. 12, No. 3, Fall 1989



CTR Becomes CMR

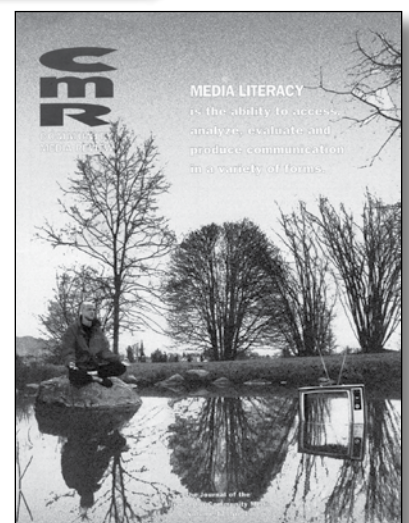
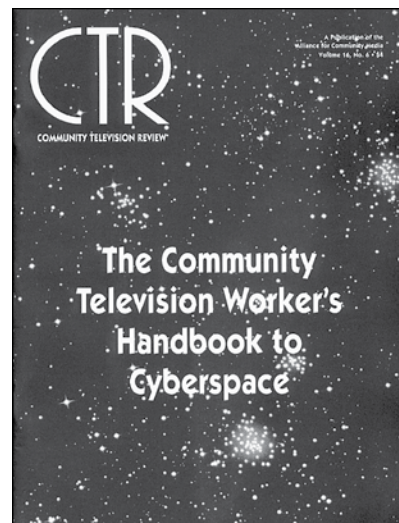
The word "media" is plural for medium, which is described by the American Heritage Dictionary this way:

- 1) Something occupying a position or having a condition midway between extremes;
- 2) An intervening substance through which something is transmitted or carried on, as an agency for transmitting energy;
- 3) A surrounding environment in which something functions and thrives;
- 4) The substance in which a specific organism functions and thrives;
- 5) The materials used in a specific artistic technique.

With the change this issue of our name from *Community Television Review* to *Community Media Review*, we want to create a surrounding environment for the organism "access maven" to function and thrive. We want to create an intervening substance for transmitting energy. We want to provide a space for the materials for artistic techniques.

We hope you approve; we hope you read, learn, share and act.

— Dirk Koning, CMR editorial board chair
CMR, Vol. 17, No. 1, January/February 1994



Hit Pause, Then Search: Looking Forward after Twenty Years of Access

by *Andrew Blau*



Andrew Blau is a scenario practitioner at Global Business Network, where he helps organizations identify and adapt to the trends and pressures that will shape their future. He served as chair of the Alliance board of directors from 1991-92, and in 1994 received the Buske Leadership Award.

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[The following is the text of Andrew Blau's keynote address at the 1991 NFLCP Northeast/Mid-Atlantic bi-regional conference in East Hartford, CT, April 1991.]

ACCESS HAS GROWN MORE VIGOROUSLY than even many of its supporters sometimes recognize. Less than 20 years after the first American access cablecast in July, 1971, access channels are in about 2,000 communities making an estimated 15,000 hours per week of original programming available. That's more than ABC, NBC, CBS and PBS produce in a year combined. If the skeptics are to be believed, as much as \$200 million went to support access channels in 1989, a tiny fraction of the cost of network programming.

Twenty years may sound like a long time when we think of our efforts so far, but not if we consider that many things that today we take for granted were still considered "new ideas" after that period. As a recent newspaper column about personal computers noted: the great payoff has not materialized and, if history is a guide, which it usually is, the payoff will probably not appear until the 21st century. The railroad, the electric motor and the car were similarly anemic when they were in their youths. Ingrained national habits had to change ... and in each case that took a generation or more to achieve.

That's something that many of us who work with access every day are often too close to see: access challenges some deeply ingrained national habits about television, and changing them will take time. Twenty years is normally just the first phase.

Moreover, the movement for access has achieved as much as it has during a period when communications technology, communications policy and the First Amendment itself have been entirely reoriented. As we look forward in the wake of these changes, it is crucial that we clarify or focus what we do. If not, we run the risk that 10 or 20 years from now, in a world of fiber optics, direct broadcast satellites and video from the phone company, public access may have been reduced to little more than a tolerated relic of an earlier, more idealistic age, if it hasn't been squeezed out as irrelevant or wasteful.

Surveying the electronic frontier

Since 1971, when access first appeared, communication through electronic media has been transformed by the fax machine, the connection between the computer and the telephone, fundamental changes in the telephone network, cellular telephones and other technology. We can now communicate among ourselves in many new ways: conference calls, video conferencing, computer bulletin boards, voice mail, broadcast, fax, and others that are turn-

Lest We Forget

Before community media

"... sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air and stay there without a book, magazine, newspaper, profit and loss sheet, or rating book to

distract you – keep your eyes glued to the set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland."

— *Newton N. Minow*
as newly-elected chair of the FCC in 1961,
talking to the nation's broadcasters.

ing individual media, like the telephone, into a mass medium, while pay-per-view options and VCRs are turning the mass media into more of an individualized medium.

But the one constant is that freedom of speech is never won easily in new media. Access advocates are not alone in facing what feels like an uphill battle to secure the right to freely communicate electronically. Consider:

Prodigy, an interactive computer information service operated by Sears and IBM and supported by advertisers, set rules against using the Prodigy system for certain purposes, including discussing the rates it charged for its services or contacting the system's advertisers about anything other than their products. When some subscribers wanted to discuss a rate hike, they had their accounts cancelled and they were removed from the system.

Dialog Information Services, which provides online access to information, including Dun & Bradstreet's Financial Records database of information about 700,000 U.S. corporations, refused to allow a number of unions to get access to D&B's information.

Local telephone companies, which have always carried all traffic regardless of content, are now hoping to keep controversial messages off their "970" and "540" lines in order to protect their business reputations, while Sprint, AT&T and MCI screen messages for their "900" services. (Sprint is said to reject 40 percent of its applicants.)

Tom Metzger, whose racist program *Race and Reason* has been on access channels in many communities, has also been using voice mail. The White Aryan Resistance (WAR) Hot Line had been operating in perhaps 15 cities for as long as five years when the operator of the voice mail system shut down the WAR phones due to protests.

The Secret Service shut down dozens of electronic bulletin boards and executed a nationwide dragnet against computer "hackers" with chilling results. A college student was put on trial by the U.S. government for interstate transport of stolen property for something he transmitted in

his electronic newsletter. (The case was dropped when it became clear that the "stolen" document was generally available for under \$13.) Employees of a computer games manufacturer came to work one day to find that the Secret Service had seized their offices, ransacked their files, and confiscated their computers, disks, monitors – even their laser printers – seeking information. The company was never charged with anything, but had to layoff half its employees because of the losses it sustained. Another hacker came home to find the Secret Service had entered his home, guns drawn, and confiscated his computer, books, telephone answering machine, "boom box," and all his cassette tapes. No charge was ever filed. In fact, 10 months after the Secret Service shut down the bulletin boards, the government has not issued any indictments.

This level of pressure was generated because of fears about individual speech that was transmitted electronically. (The same speech would be legal if it were in print.) Clearly, the issues we face in the access community are shared in a variety of new media. Our struggles and our potential allies may be more widespread than we often imagine.

On hallowed ground

At the same time the technology has been changing, the role of communication policy has changed substantially. When Congress created the Federal Communications Commission in 1934, it directed the agency to regulate broadcasting in the "public interest." The FCC and the courts evolved a broad framework through which communication policy was linked

NFLCP: The Way It Was

"In cable systems long ago and far away (small pockets of activity in the early '70s), a rag-tag fleet of access centers in the face of insurmountable odds, searched for a place in the communications industry galaxy where locally made, community-responsive programming could flourish. They set up base camps on the (once) protected access channels and fortified themselves with the aid of municipalities and local institutions. Technical facilities were pieced together with worn-out or low-cost equipment abandoned by the Cable Empire in its retreat from commercial local origination strategies during the last recession.

"Joined by rebellious program directors on the fringes of the Empire, a loose Federation was formed to address local communications needs both from within and outside the cable industry. Bound together by a Force – a belief in demystifying television and strict adherence to localism – these Blue Sky walkers worked to bring about a New Age of the Active Television Viewer/Participant. The high ideals and commitment of this fleet inspired others to join the Quest for an Alternative to Broadcasting-Style Television."

— Susan Bednarczyk,
CTR, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 1986,
opening scenes from 'Access Wars.'

to other social needs and interests.

Beginning in the late 1970s, that orientation began to change: the “public interest” was turned into “what interests the

public,” as deregulation equated sound policy with simple popularity. By the mid-80s, the FCC chair claimed that the television was “a toaster with pictures,” an appliance like any other. As a result, the regulatory framework in which access channels were created and originally supported has evaporated.

The First Amendment itself has also been recast in recent years. Monroe Price, a long-time observer of cable law and policy, reflected recently on “the uses and abuses of the First Amendment.” In a provocative, short essay, Price wrote:

“[S]omething is wrong, very wrong, with the current debate over telecommunications policy. The First Amendment, so central to our culture, is being wheeled out not to nourish full and open debate, but as a decisive force in structuring the communications industry.

The victory of Tom Paine is being corporatized; I fear that in the new First Amendment order, the real Paines of the world may be ill-served. The soapbox is being replaced by the mail. We may be creating a plastic freedom in which the logic of the First Amendment becomes the enemy of the realization of a multitude of speech ... We become flooded with images, but poorer in public debate.”

As a result, Price concludes, our government, and by extension our society, can no longer build a communications policy that magnifies the possibility of speech. Everything is now a First Amendment “speaker,” and any effort to craft sound policy by balancing competing interests

appears to abridge someone’s Constitutional rights. That, of course, paralyzes the policy-making process. The only active spot seems to be the courts. As a result, wealthy litigants, who can afford the best legal services and can maintain these commitments for years, may well end up winning their claims to constitutional protection over their poorly financed, overextended opponents.

What about access?

If the First Amendment has been corporatized, communications policy has become a simple economic policy, and technology has made electronic communication widely available, what are the implications for those of us committed to providing and expanding public access? I believe it means returning to the fundamental question: What do access centers do? We often speak generally of the First Amendment and our First Amendment “mission,” but I think that misses the point and can sometimes blind us to our real mission. Stripped to the essentials, access centers are education and communication centers in community settings. The service is not upholding the First Amendment. The First Amendment is the foundation upon which we build our efforts.

The relationship that religious groups have with the First Amendment is instructive. Religious groups are also protected by the First Amendment, which begins “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ...” While this “free exercise” protection is as dear to every religious institution as free speech protection is to every access center, the First Amendment is not the goal of any church or synagogue. If threatened, they will fight tenaciously to maintain their First Amendment rights, but they know their real goals lie elsewhere. Their right to freely pursue those goals is the gift of the First Amendment. Analogously, the goals for access centers lie elsewhere than the First Amendment itself: to educate and provide people with tools to use a modern communications medium to meet their own communication needs, as they define them.

Lest We Forget

Free speech déjà vu?

“Plaintiffs [Turner, Time Warner] have come before this Court, not because their freedom of speech is seriously threatened, but because their profits are; to dress up their complaint in First Amendment garb demeans the principles for which the First Amendment stands and the protections it was designed to afford ... this case is not about protecting free speech and the First Amendment. This case is about market domination and control.”

— U.S. District Court Judge Sporkin
in his concurring opinion that ‘must carry’
provisions of the 1992 Cable Act
are constitutional.

In this context, “education” means more than just the basics of video production. Access centers should provide an education in the means to participate in today’s most influential information medium. When access first developed in the early 1970s, the aim was to give people access to the equipment so that they could speak for themselves. Many believed that access to equipment would promote change for the better. But, according to some estimates, there are now over 70 million camcorders in the U.S. The opportunity to express oneself electronically has not led to widespread social change, at least not yet, even if one man with a camcorder can turn an entire nation’s attention to police brutality. Obviously getting people’s hands on the equipment is not enough by itself. Centers that provide opportunities for producers to develop their communication skills; for viewers to consider and think critically about the medium; for artists to develop and realize their ideas in video; and for all community members to develop access to the medium in whatever manner they choose are moving in the right, which is to say comprehensive, direction.

Similarly, if we consider access centers as communication centers, that is, places where people can make use of a technology for local communication needs, we will develop a far broader and more comprehensive definition than simply a place to make “television.” Consider the model of the telephone. While it is certainly a sales tool, an important feature of the economic infrastructure, and a source of information and entertainment, we have no problem recognizing its role as a personal communication tool, where we determine the content and the quality of the message and the recipient chooses to listen or do something else. Video distributed by wire ought to have a similar diversity of uses. Access centers are the principal areas where the public can develop those possibilities and free video communication from the narrow constraints of television production, just as legions of independent computer programmers developed uses for the PC that freed the computer from being only a tool for big business, the gov-

ernment and the military.

When we conceive of access centers in that context, I believe it shows that access is way ahead of its time, not a marginal adjunct to “real TV.” Access centers shift the balance of power from mass to media; they provide the possibility for, and should encourage, new uses for video as a communications medium. Access uses the trappings of television distributed by cable (a mass medium configured to entertain people and deliver viewers to advertisers) in a non-mass way. Some people call that “narrow-casting,” but that word’s inescapable relationship to broadcast suggests that “point-to-multi-point” might be more accurate (if less elegant), reflecting the individuality of the recipients as well as the sender and invoking telecommunications models instead of TV.

If we reconceptualize access centers as places where we teach people how video can be a communication tool, then access centers become the seedbed of the future when people can send video to others over a network for any variety of purposes. Access centers become the birthplace of the “video dial tone” that some communications policy makers have been promoting: an open line to every cabled home that people can fill on a non-discriminatory basis with the programming of their choice.

In a different vein, leaders in the computer industry are developing multimedia PCs, promising that “desk top” video will join text, data and voice first in business communication and assuredly in personal communication as well. A headline on the front page of a recent industry newsletter announced that a breakthrough in computer chips “brings full-motion video processing to desktops: low-cost peripherals promise explosion in office and home uses.” The chip, which will go into mass

NFLCP: The Way It Was

“For the newcomers: I hope you will understand where these million-dollar post-franchise access investments come from. Each year, since our access history began, there’s been some new threat... some event we all thought was the end of the line. But we’re still here and access is here, too. If you want to get a feel of the energy it took to get it this far, have a look at the NFLCP accomplishments between 1976 and 1980. During those years, NFLCP was all-volunteer, cooperative effort (that’s right, no paid staff) running on adrenalin.”

— Susan Bednarczyk,
CTR, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 1986,
opening scenes from “Access Wars”

CMR Nuggets

“We must have access if this form of government is to continue ...there is no marketplace of ideas in mass media because the devotion is to merchandising.”

— Former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson at the National Conference on Public Access Cable Television in San Diego, 1978, reprinted from NFLCP Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 1978

Did You Know?

In 1975, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB) was formed, which became a model for the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers that followed in 1976, which you now know as the Alliance for Community Media.

— reprinted from *CTR*,
Vol. 14, No. 2, June/July 1991



production later this year, can integrate digital motion video, special effects, stills, audio, graphics and text in multimedia applications. It can be programmed to permit super-imposing text over images, scaling of video into windows and video effects such as zoom, scan, merge and fade. The chips manufacturer predicts that by 1995, "Software applications incorporating digital video will take the place of character-only software on most desktop PCs." There's one catch, though: where will the video come from? While a stock catalogue of video images may be made available, that would limit the multimedia capacity to mere illustration. It would be like having a desktop publishing program that was limited to a stock catalogue of texts. Without a source of video that can meet the particular communication needs of each document, multimedia PCs on everyone's desk seem far less exciting. In fact, access centers are the forerunners of video used by non-specialists to communicate, not just record. As video, distinct from "television," becomes more pervasive, as the growth in camcorders and multimedia computing sug-

gests it will, access centers will come into their own as the fertile crescent of this brave new world.

So, after 20 years of access, where are we? Perhaps we are ahead of the telecommunications industry and ahead of the policy makers. Perhaps access centers are the laboratories where the future of electronic communications is being developed by tens of thousands of unpaid researchers. And wouldn't that be the ultimate irony? If, after years of titanic battles among the industry giants, and between them and Congress (creating a "Godzilla vs. King Kong" atmosphere where the access community often seems to play the part of the citizens of Tokyo), the prize will be to do what access centers have been doing all along. But the access movement will be able to stake its claim only if access providers move decisively in the years ahead to focus on what makes access centers distinct and valuable as the tools to make and distribute video become commonplace. **CMR**

In The Beginning

The more things change, the more they stay the same

"House Communications Subcommittee chairperson Lionel VanDeerlin submitted the first draft of the Communications rewrite. It would deregulate cable with no provisions for public access, and grant permanent licenses for TV and radio stations, while eliminating their public service requirements."

— from *NFLCP Newsletter*, Vol 1, No 6, June/July 1978,
"Deregulation—Yes; Public Service—No"



Access in the 21st Century: The Future of a Public

by Robert H. Devine

[The following is an excerpt from Robert Devine's presentation given at the 1992 Alliance for Community Media Central States Fall Regional Conference in Columbus, OH.]

PROJECTING A FUTURE can be a tricky business. Certainly there are technological trends worth considering: the rapid digitalization of video and the marriage of computer and production systems developments in ISDN [Integrated Services Digital Network], packet switching and fiber optics; HDTV and "scalability." Industry trends involving the coming linkages of telcos and cable and the movement to squeeze the public out of telecommunications present us with a bleak analysis of the future, while the resurgence of community broadcasting in Europe and elsewhere seems to balance these trends and portend a future of grassroots activism and socially responsible media. In thinking about what I might say about the future of access, however, I decided against (a) presenting a high-tech scenario to dazzle our imagination, (b) weaving a sermon of stern gloom and moral resolve for our passionately marginal enterprise, or (c) leading a Pollyanna pep rally to cheer us on our way. Rather, I would like to consider the very nature of projecting a future and tease out some of the implications that this project might have for what I consider to be the central mission of public access.

Visioning of the future is generally done by the middle and upper-middle classes. The wealthy, if I might generalize, are content with things as they are; their positions are well-served by maintaining the status quo. The poor lack several critical prerequisites for visioning a future. In addition to lacking these prerequisites, the poor also have considerable experience with the sort of de-skilling and work

replacement that is engendered by many "future-oriented" technologies and visions. The future is fraught with difficulties and is generally not a source of concrete optimism.

The middle classes are able to imagine, vision, discuss and even participate in the forging of a future. They also have the disposable income necessary to acquire the conveniences and amenities of twentieth century life. For example, the profiles of the future with which we are most familiar often include extended and enhanced use of, and interaction among, the technologies of the VCR, the home computer and the cable (or other means of broadband delivery). Clearly, the technological base that we assume to be standard for most projections of an informationally rich future, is contingent on discretionary income. And, to some degree, will be accessible only to certain segments of the broad population.

Such future projections are also premised upon the availability of discretionary time. The middle classes possess the discretionary time and energy for education, for participation in public life, for travel, leisure and reflection. The more sophisticated technologies of an information future require a learning base; we all know the difficulties of providing access training to those who cannot afford the time away from a job or children, and the learning curve involved. While there has been a perceived decline in support for the public education of future generations, those with the necessary time and money are still able to avail themselves of educational opportunities, which will provide them the information and agency necessary to become active participants in a democracy. Discretionary time also provides the opportunity for citizens to participate in the formation of public opinion – through city council meetings,



Robert Devine teaches Media and Social Change at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. He has been involved in public access since 1969, leading startups of the Dallas, Milwaukee and Manhattan access systems, as well as policy planning, system design, community ascertainment and system evaluation for a number of access organizations across the country. Most recently, Bob served as interim executive director of Manhattan Neighborhood Network during a transition in leadership. Bob has served on *Community Media Review's* editorial board and the national board of the Alliance. He is the 1994 recipient of the Alliance's George Stoney Award for Humanistic Communication.

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Did You Know?

Early in 1988, the **Alliance for Communications Democracy** was formed by 10 public access organizations to represent their interests in federal lawsuits brought by cable companies challenging the constitutionality of access channels and financial responsibilities to them. Founding members included:

- Chicago Access Corp.;
- Fairfax [VA] Cable Access Corp.;
- Montgomery [MD] Community Television;
- Staten Island [NY] Community Television;
- Access 30 Dayton [OH],
- Milwaukee Television Authority;
- Boston Community Access and Programming Foundation;
- Grand Rapids [MI] Cable Access Center;
- Columbus [OH] Community Cable Access; *and*
- Portland [OR] Cable Access.

— *from CTR, Vol. 11, No. 2, April/May 1988*

public dialogues and debates, advocacy organizations, or even public access – a luxury that many must forego.

The implications of this line of thinking about the future have everything to do with the future of access. Diffusion of the benefits of innovation, new technology and new patterns of participation will be tied to socioeconomic status. The benefits of the future will be *privatized*, not universal. They will be available to those who can afford them. We already can see the emergence of a two-class system in the pay-as-you-go programs of museums and libraries, in the qualitative differences between public and private education, and in tiering of basic and pay cable. The middle class seems to be disappearing, and with it both the ability to vision a future and a public sphere in which public opinion about the future can be forged.

My problem with futures and future technologies is that they seem to foster private culture, expand private space and result in the diminution of a public sphere. Given the array of “future” technologies:

- You will not have to go out to meet people or to go to a movie; you can be entertained technologically in your home.
- You won’t have to go in to your office; computer and modem have colonized your private space for work.
- You won’t have to experience spontaneous random searches for information at a library; you can call up only what you already know from a database, and avoid ever encountering library “stacks.”
- You won’t have to go to a concert or a city hall meeting; you can experience such activities via cable television.
- You won’t have to go to the corner to buy a newspaper; you can access specific kinds of information, and utilize a fax machine to hardcopy only that information that’s relevant.
- You will not have to take phone messages; email and phone ma-

chines will spare you those interactions.

- You don’t have to interact to vote; electronic polling will make it unnecessary, and sophisticated computer projections will provide knowledge of outcomes before your vote is even cast.
- You will have a tremendous freedom of choice, but for the most part, choices will be constrained to private consumption, taking place almost entirely in a private sphere.

The technologies that we herald as the underpinning of an information society seem to leave us with a sense of private, rather than public, expression. We cherish freedom of speech but, as we have seen with the current debates over “hate-speech,” we are unsure about the concomitant responsibilities or consequences of speech in a public arena. Our notion of freedom of expression is grounded in the prerogatives of self-interested expression (“I should be allowed to express whatever I want.”), rather than an emphasis on rational discourse, discussion and dialogue for the *common good* of the community. In access, we consistently see vanity video, self-aggrandizement, autonomous expression, pale imitations of celebrity and spectacle, rather than public discourse with functional value.

By ‘public sphere’ we mean, first of all, a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed.

The ideas inherent in this public sphere are worth elaborating upon and reiterating. The public sphere is:

- Accessible – open in principle to participation by all;
- Public – in contrast to the exercise of private established authority;
- Critical – in discussion of state authority and of the state of society;
- Rational – in testing and measuring ideas through rational debate;
- Seeking the common good – rather than simple personal expression or self-interest;
- Mediating between state and so-

ciety – debating the general rules governing relations;

- Directed at achieving consensus – attempting, through public discussion, to arrive at common understanding and purpose.

This is the grounding of our First Amendment, and many of our notions of a free press, a marketplace of ideas and participatory democracy. The ideal is an informed and enlightened polity, airing and discussing common concerns in a public arena, reaching agreements about the shape and directions of our society. These are also the founding characteristics of public access.

What we are currently experiencing is a re-feudalization of the public sphere, and the losses are substantial. The marketplace of ideas is for those with the resources to enter it. The video dialtone system, approved recently by the FCC, provides an excellent example. Alan Bushong's analogy to placing tollbooths in the path of public participation is an apt comparison. The First Amendment protects autonomous expression, but the utilitarian values of public discussion and debate tend to get lost. Public access gets tagged with the bizarre, the self-involved, and vanity video, while the First Amendment is marginalized in the process. Corporate entities (most notably Phillip Morris and the cable industry) stridently assert rights as self-interested speakers, and public opinion becomes something that is *distributed* rather than forged by an informed and active public. Does the public know the form and implications of the telecommunications complex that is taking shape behind closed doors? Is there public participation and debate? Are telecommunications "consumers" (a role much more confining than that of "participant," implying, of course, that culture is a commodity rather than a practice), merely another "special interest" group with marginal access to the marketplace of ideas? In the erosion of public discourse, the "public" ultimately loses its convictions about the value of civic participation, its belief in its ability to affect change or to make a difference, and its

sense of public life.

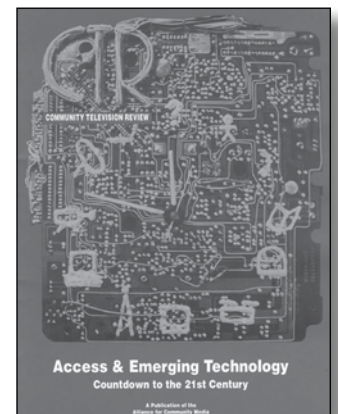
And so public access. We cannot for a single minute take the elegance of the model for granted. *Public access brings private citizens into public life.* It creates associations, forges coalitions, and transforms private concern into public activism. Within the access structure is the mandate to make public participation accessible to all – without regard to income, education, race, gender or political persuasion. It stimulates and supports public expression and dialogue, and provides a forum for discussion of the issues of concern in 2000 communities across the country. In the process, public access shields participants from economic or state intimidation or intervention, allowing *all* ideas to be discussed and tested through rational public debate. Most often, access organizations perform their role in public, with open meetings and the scrutiny of clientele and press alike. And in the multi-cultural '90s, public access provides an incredible vehicle for the preservation, practice, enhancement and transmission of unique cultural traditions. It encourages and facilitates coming to voice, and enables diverse sub-cultural groups to define and articulate their distinct identities. It provides all of its clientele with the agency that comes of entering into the public discourse of the community. In short, *public access is the last best hope for a public sphere and for an active and enlightened polity.* Given our current corporate telecommunications climate, *public access is also the future of the "public" in public communications,* and the more often we remind ourselves of that fact, the clearer our mission becomes. **cMR**

CMR Nuggets

"We are awash in information – a tsunami of information. What's needed is not more information; what's needed is more discussion and debate with our neighbors ... It's community that we're missing, and if television has the potential to build community, it will be through you."

— Eric Utne of Utne Reader, from his address at the 1992 national NFCLP conference in Minneapolis

— reprinted from
CTR, Vol. 15, No. 6,
November/December 1992



Andrew Young Speaks Out for Access

by Andrew Young



Ordained as a minister, **Andrew Young** has been a leader in the Civil Rights movement for nearly half a century, beginning with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1960. He was with Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 when King was assassinated. Young became Georgia's first African-American Congressman since Reconstruction in 1972, and in 1976 was appointed Ambassador to the UN by President Jimmy Carter, who awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1981. He served two terms as mayor of Atlanta, beginning in 1981, running unsuccessfully for governor of Georgia in the 1990 Democratic primary. Young is today co-chair of Good Works International, a consulting firm offering international market access and political risk analysis in key emerging markets within Africa and the Caribbean.

[The following text is excerpted from Andrew Young's keynote address at the 1993 Alliance for Community Media National Convention in Atlanta.]

FOR WE SEE THE PUBLIC ACCESS movement as a continuation of the dream and the vision of the Civil Rights movement, and the human rights movement generally. What we were marching for was to get a hearing. Martin used to always quote Victor Hugo who said that, "Violence is the language of the unheard." When people explode in violence it is because they have been ignored, because they have been isolated, because they're frustrated that they have no access. We had to march for access, and marching just three or four blocks – trying to get to City Hall to try to get the attention of whoever was the mayor – normally got us thrown in jail.

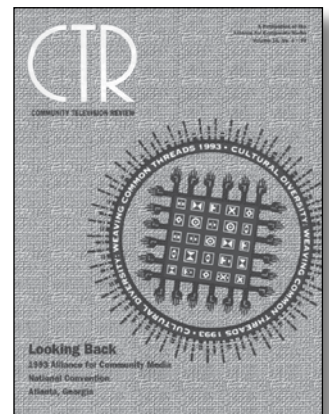
People brought out police dogs, people put fire hoses on us. We had to basically risk our lives just to say, "Wait a minute, we can't vote! We're not trying to burn anything down. We don't want to destroy the country. We just want the same citizenship rights and respect for our human dignity that is accorded to every other American citizen, and that ought to be accorded to every other person on the face of this small planet of ours."

It was there that the dream of human rights was born that has swept across this planet. But that dream must be kept alive by some ongoing mechanism of communication. It really is too strenuous and there are too many complex issues for you to get together a group of people and march every time you have a problem. It takes too long to get the attention.

I like to tell people, particularly young black people, who always say to me, "Why can't we get together like you all were in the sixties?" [T]here were four hun-

dred black Baptist churches in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963, and they voted overwhelmingly to keep Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference out. They didn't even want us in town. We had a small cadre of about 25 churches that basically were the Civil Rights movement. When Martin Luther King went to jail, we had a big campaign on for two months to try to get people to march with Martin Luther King. Fifty-five people showed up. It ended up on page 34 of the *Birmingham Post Herald*. I'm saying that we were marching for access. We were marching for the right to communicate and because of some of that marching, and because of the awareness of people-power that emerged later in the '60s, when we ended up with cable television and the proliferation of channels, there was a movement of people who said, "Wait a minute. This may be an answer. This may be an answer where people don't have to go to the big businesses of the world to buy time, to get a minute, where they don't have to be controlled by any particular power oligarchy, but where people can have the freedom and the opportunity to say whatever in the hell they please, whenever in the hell they want to!" **CMR**

— reprinted from
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July/August 1993



Become Media Active and a Champion for Diversity

by Richard Turner

[The following is an excerpt from Richard Turner's acceptance address for the Jewell Ryan-White Award for Cultural Diversity given at the 1999 Alliance for Community Media International Conference in Cincinnati.]

ALOHA KAKOU. Greetings Everyone. I am particularly honored to receive the Jewell Ryan-White Award for Diversity. Most of you may not be familiar with her efforts to improve this organization and improve media. Her work ... Brothers and Sisters ... our work ... is not done. I use the words Brothers and Sisters to include you as part of my family. It is tradition in many First Nations, including Hawai'i, to refer to individuals who are not blood relatives as Uncle or Auntie or brothers and sisters, and so I do with you, to broaden our ability to accept one another and to ensure that all are treated like family.

The only thing more challenging than a crisis is the apparent absence of one. In the apparent absence of a crisis, my challenge to you today, is to become media active and revitalize our movement by focusing on issues of social justice, social change, and empowerment through diversity.

You need not look far to find that our communities, our society, continue to strain under artificial constructs that divide us and are consistently reinforced in mainstream media. Media tends toward a homogenization of culture and, therefore, our beliefs. As the stakes for capturing eyeballs increases with each mega-merger, content is manipulated to obtain the greatest number of viewers or hits. Local television and cable licenses were originally built upon the principles of public interest, convenience and necessity, and structured to ensure perpetuation of the First Amendment.

Now we find an environment in which the regulatory role has been relegated to

ensuring competition. In today's market, competition appears to mean competing for the biggest stock buyout. As a result, ownership and control of media by minorities has gone down in the past 10 years. And this is considered progress?

Oh yes, and how far have we progressed? Who are the hundreds, maybe more, who have died or suffered due to intolerance and bigotry in just the last couple of years, all in the ideal of perpetuating the opposite of diversity – purity? Colorado, Wyoming, Texas, Florida, New York, and the most recent, Chicago, where another isolated white male unable to cope with a changing world, who will no longer see a majority rule by 2050, seeks refuge in a church that was established for the “Survival, Expansion, and Advancement of our White Race exclusively.” Don't expect this to stop. The Southern Poverty Law Center has documented over 475 organizations committed to acts of hate and bigotry.

When we look back at what has produced significant societal shifts, you will observe a corollary with the advent of a new technology. That new technology provides an opportunity to dominate – to subjugate. The most sustainable technology for recording time has provided its inventors the ability to perpetuate a history, a truth built upon the inventors' construct of reality. Consider the pyramids. Those in command of new technology are enabled with the capacity to perpetuate or obliterate culture.

We must revitalize our movement and include within our mission the perpetuation of all cultures. This is not an industry, as we don't typically create products. We are a movement. We are about changing from one state to another. In particular, we must become skilled in the practice of cultural identification. We must become identified as the source in our community for knowing how to instill culture(s) into



Richard Turner is today executive director of Montgomery Community Television. Prior to MCT, Turner was president and owner of communivision, a consulting firm focusing on communications and information technologies. For most of the '90s, he was executive director of O'lelo: The Corporation for Community Television in Honolulu. In the late '80s, Turner was operations director for MCT. He has more than 30 years of experience in community media and community organizing and received the Alliance's Jewel Ryan-White Award for Cultural Diversity in 1999. He serves on the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council board of directors and has served on the national board of the Alliance for Community Media. His background includes television production, communications engineering, data systems management, web development, organizational assessments, and community needs assessment.

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technologies. We must move out of the stagnation of obsessive fascination with technology. It is more than just about providing access to tools.

We must become media active, not media passive. With that comes the risk of being judged as influencing content. Anyone who thinks that relying solely upon first-come, first-served, one-size-fits-all principles is enough and furthermore not biased, is fooling themselves. You are taught to be biased from day one by your culture and reinforced by its media. That bias is instilled in the culture of your organization, in your policies and procedures. Just by the very nature of utilizing a medium that requires practiced cultural skills, such as being out in front of a camera, means we have a bias which establishes a barrier to accessibility.

You should be asking yourselves, and all who are involved in access: what are the cultural practices in my access organization? Does my staff all think alike ... look alike? I will know we are making progress when our listservs and workshops have more "air time" committed to inclusive practices and perpetuating diversity, in addition to what is the latest digital technology.

We must go further than media literacy – we must become culturally literate. We must be able to identify, relate to, embrace and empathize with the most fragile or endangered cultures, such as our host cultures of the First Nations, what some refer to as Indian or Native.

This is an overwhelming task, but I believe access is one of the best ways to achieve this. It is overwhelming considering the domination of transnational corporations who have a vested interest in a particular and perhaps singular cultural construct. This continues to divide us. We must begin to ask people like Bill Gates how many billions of personal worth and consumed or defeated competitors it will take to prove he really is a man. I thought it was particularly fitting that at a recent Washington Metro Cable luncheon, John Evans presented a thank you gift to Lee Masters, president of Liberty Digital Media, for his presentation, in which he discussed the future of interactive television. The gift was a book titled, *Plantation Houses of Virginia*. Are we not still on the plantation, but the size and form have changed along with the masters?

These are the questions and practices we must explore and keep the focus of our

CMR Nuggets

A stable enough idea

"Grass Roots [Aspen, CO] started innocently enough. One person, one PortaPak, and one idea. The idea: to see if this exciting electronic tool could be used for the good of the community. Originally, the plan was to shoot community events and play them back in bars where people congregate. But Peggy said, 'Why not ask the cable company for a channel?' Eleanor said, 'I'd like to help!' I asked the owner of a large commercial TV station if he thought one could create a TV station using half-inch video. 'Impossible!' he said. That's all it took. Grass Roots was born. And, luckily, none of us had had any previous television experience.

"We incorporated. We were given channel 12 by the local cable company. We raised enough money for a modulator. An electronic engineer appeared out of nowhere and worked it out so we could originate from his trailer. That was in 1971. Three volunteers, no capital, little equipment, and a hair-brained idea."



— John Smith in the NFLCP Newsletter,
Vol. 1, No. 1, June/July 1977,
from "Grass Roots: Six Years Later, 'Hair-brained' Idea Is
Stable Community Television"

movement for social change. Pua Burgess, a community worker and leader in Hawai'i, tells this story from a scene in the Warner Brothers movie *The Assassins*, a rather bizarre movie that has us relating to the warm personal side of a hired killer. In this scene, a story is told about a little sparrow that flew south for the Winter but en route became frozen and fell to the ground in a cow pasture. A cow came along and dropped a fresh load of excrement on the frozen sparrow. The warm, fresh manure defrosted the little bird and it began to sing. A cat hearing the bird sing found it and pushed it from the pile of manure, wiped it off and proceeded to eat it. And the moral of this story, we are told, is that not everyone who craps on you is your enemy, nor is everyone who digs you out of shit, your friend. Pua stops there with an important lesson in doing community work. In the movie however, they go a step further with the lesson, which is that if you are warm and comfortable, even though you are in a pile of shit, you should keep your mouth shut. This is the lesson Warner Brothers wants us to learn. I don't intend to be quiet.

I have one last story to tell and one last challenge, and then I'm done. It is a personal story about my family. My mother-in-law is a full-blooded Mohawk. She was taken from her land at the age of eight and placed in a Jesuit school designed to acculturate First Nation peoples of Canada to make it possible, in their minds, for her to survive in a European-centric world. Her mouth was washed out with soap and she was punished any time she was caught speaking her language and practicing her culture. She graduated from that school never to return to her birth land, and deprived of her birth heritage. She survived those lessons to the extent that her children's birth certificates listed them as white.


And here is the rub. We are forced to separate ourselves in a social construct that was created to divide and conquer. You are white unless you have a drop of non-white blood. And thus the genesis of the concept of race. Race is an artificial social construct, not a genetic or biologic construct. In response to OMB Directive

15, which establishes the categories of race on the U.S. Census forms, the American Anthropological Association rejected race categories as a racist ranking system based on appearance. "Race has no scientific justification in human biology."

I challenge you to go back to your communities and begin to eliminate racist-based implementations that divide us. Remove references to race in your anti-discriminatory statements. Replace it with color, with class, with economic status, and other non-racist implementations.

The story of my mother-in-law actually ends on a sad, but healing and hopeful, note, beyond the fact that her life changed mine when I married her daughter Michele. This past June she died at the age of 79 and was buried in the Catholic tradition. At her burial, her grandson, who now lives in a Mohawk resettlement, sang a traditional Mohawk song of thanksgiving in the language of the peoples of Akwesasne. It was a healing that restored the hopes of perpetuating a culture that was stolen in her generation. I am a richer person for having that experience.

I want to thank the many people who have provided me with the insights and guidance to live a life that allows me to cross the boundaries of culture. From my Grandfather Richard B. Moore, a radical in Harlem who could be heard proclaiming in the 1960s that he is an Afro-American and that freed men name themselves, to George Stoney who has serendipitously influenced my life to use media for social change, to my contemporaries including Junior Ekau and Nalani Mattox who are community project managers at O'lelo and continue to teach me how to be sensitive to the Native Hawaiian host culture. And in particular to my parents Burg and Joyce, and my life partner and wife Michele. It is because of them, and many others, that would take another 10 minutes to name, that I am able to be so recognized for contributions to a process that encourages, facilitates or creates culturally diverse and/or non-mainstream community involvement in the field of community media.

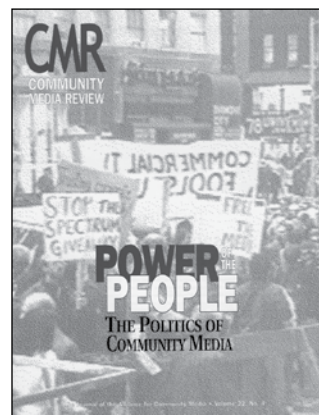
Mahalo nui loa. 

About Pioneers

"Without a doubt, the most important social phenomenon of the latter part of the twentieth century has been the enfranchisement of blacks, brought into being by the Civil Rights movement. When the idea of access is fully implemented, when it is carried beyond cable to all electronic media, as I am confident it will be one day, this movement that is absorbing so much of our energies and concern today will be seen as one every bit as important for the welfare of all Americans as was civil rights."

excerpted from
"Public Access: A Word
About Pioneers"
by George Stoney,
from CTR, Vol. 9, No. 2,
Summer 1986

— reprinted from *CMR*,
 Vol. 22, No.4, Winter 1999



300 Words for the Next 30 years

ISUPPOSE IT WAS YOUTHFUL NAIVETÉ, but back in 1984, a few short years after we started public access television in Grand Rapids, Michigan, I thought if only we could get through Senate Bill 66 intact, it would be smooth sailing for our movement. And if we could convince the cable companies to use public access as a selling point instead of a point of contention, all would be wonderful in the world of local, democratic media.

I should have known better, when in 1981, the general manager of GE Cablevision stuck the first quarterly payment to our organization in his hip pocket and told Dirk Koning, our newly hired executive director, to just pick it. SB66 changed the nature of the game. We no longer got our check from the cable company, but from the city. We weren't complaining though, because we got a lot more money out of the deal. But what was once a simple transaction between an organization and the cable company often became politicized at the local level. Grand Rapids has been fortunate to have had enlightened municipal leadership all those years, but the same can't be said for everywhere.

George Stoney

IN THE BEGINNING it was about community. It still is, or ought to be.

When we created the Alternate Media Center (AMC) at New York University in 1971, only a handful of New Yorkers, and only those in Manhattan, could get cable. We



New York University Professor **George Stoney** has been involved in the production and use of socially relevant media since 1946. In 1971, responding to New York City's new cable franchise that pioneered the concept of public access, NYU created the Alternate Media Center

to train students as facilitators. Within four years, AMC's interns helped spread the concept across the country and formed a national organization now known as the Alliance for Community Media. George continues to teach film production and history/criticism as Goddard Professor of Cinema at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

Twenty-plus years on, protecting this fragile electronic green space has never been harder, or more fraught with corporate/legislative forces allied against us. The fact that the NFLCP/Alliance for Community Media has survived these 30 years in an increasingly anti-democratic environment may be cause to celebrate, but as we've learned through experience, it is never enough. History teaches us the war may never be won. And as abolitionist Wendell Phillips so famously wrote, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

As new generations of activists pick up the cudgel, I invite you to take heart from some of those who have gone before. "300 Words for the Next 30 Years" is the voice of experience talking.

I also invite you to add your thoughts. If you have a comment on one of the following essays, please visit us online at communitymediareview.org and follow links to "30 Years On," where you are encouraged to add comments to the articles in this issue. You can also use this space to submit your own 300-word version of the future.

Tim Goodwin
Guest Editor

were using the crude half-inch video rigs available at the time to help engage people in solving problems in their neighborhoods and in their lives. We knew then, and we know now, that change does not come when tapes are viewed in isolation. Video helped contending parties speak their minds, often recorded in their homes or on street corners, wherever they felt comfortable. Then we had viewing sessions in our center where these spokespersons could gather with others who shared the same concerns. These were always followed by discussions, which, we hoped, would suggest solutions.

Reports from the field, from AMC interns who, in the next couple of years, had spread across the country, as well as reports from other pioneers who were testing the medium, told us that television viewing could actually promote passivity and inaction. Viewers often felt that watching a tape in isolation had somehow involved them in finding solutions. Our experiences showed that the tendency to make access centers primarily places where individuals could make their egocentric programs was very often counter-productive, if our purpose was to build community and promote change.

So, most outstanding access centers in the '70s and

early '80s became places where people came together and worked with those from different neighborhoods, different faiths, different political beliefs. This is what Peggy Gilbertson was doing in Tennessee, Sue Buske in Iowa, and Nancy Jesuale in a tiny town in New Hampshire. Examples of their work can be seen in a 14-minute compilation tape edited by Rory Pinto at AMC for our friend Nicholas Johnson to help him persuade his fellow commissioners at the Federal Communications Commission to continue the modest access requirements first instituted in 1972.

Last year, when FCC Commissioner Michael Powell and his staff visited Manhattan Neighborhood Network, some suggested that with so many user-friendly tools now

in the hands of the public, our practice of giving them access to free studios and equipment was no longer necessary. Maybe, with internet allowing people to have their own blogs, chat rooms and such, the whole idea of public access to cable had seen its day. If all we are doing is serving individual producers they might have a point.

Today, thriving public access centers are also community centers, places where one can have eye contact with people who may share the same community and concerns but have very different ideas about how things can be changed. Creating an atmosphere where this can happen is still a challenge, and a daunting one.

Sue Buske

IWRITE THIS ON A BEAUTIFUL May afternoon as Randy Van Dalsen and I work to prepare charts to prove that the language proposed under pending HR5252 and SB2686 is going to prove disastrous for many PEG/CMCs across the county. It seems like this scenario has repeated itself in my life many times before.

Over the past several months, as AT&T and Verizon have spent millions and millions of dollars to destroy the ability for local communities to have control of their communications future, I have reflected upon the many obstacles that have been faced and conquered over the past 30-plus years by those who have fought to preserve PEG and the ability for communities to have bandwidth and funding to support community dialogue. If only those dollars spent by AT&T and Verizon (and others in the past) could have been spent to promote community dialogue rather than to promote corporate greed. Unfortunately, the battles we face today are simply the 2006 version of battles that have been faced before. If we're lucky, sometime soon the fighting will be over and the building can continue ... the task of building community using technology as a tool. So, as we look to the future, we need to remember what we do.

- We teach ... by bringing people and technology together in a way that creates community.
- We teach ... how to speak with the tools of the electronic media.
- We teach ... community building and community organizing.
- We teach ... the importance of keeping an open mind to viewpoints other than one's own.

As we look to the next 30 years to keep the vision alive we must :

- Advocate for the public's right to have access to ALL electronic media.
- Collaborate and build partnerships with a broad cross-section of the "community" – local, regional, national, and international.
- Educate elected officials and their staff about the importance of PEG/CMCs in building community.
- Share our commitment and vision with more and more people so that the VOICE of community becomes louder than corporate greed.

Sue Buske has been involved in the cable television field and local cable programming since 1972. She is recognized as one of the leading experts in the United States on cable policy and local programming issues and has received numerous national awards, including the George Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications, and has an award that bears her name, The Buske Leadership Award, which is presented annually by the Alliance for Community Media for outstanding leadership in community media. She was recently recognized by the University of Wisconsin with its Distinguished Alumni Award. As President of The Buske Group, she is a principal negotiator during franchise renewal and franchise compliance proceedings and has assisted in the start-up of many public, educational, and government access facilities.



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Susan Fleischmann has been involved in community media since 1976, first as a photographer and public access center producer, then as an access staff person. After a few years at BNN-TV, Susan landed the access coordinator position at the newly-opened Cambridge Community Television in 1988, becoming executive director in 1993. CCTV has won the "Overall Excellence in Public Access Programming" award five times in its history.

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Susan Fleischmann

BACK THEN IT WAS REEL TO REEL. Now it is RSS. State-of-the-art was a heavy Porta-Pak with a camera attached, mastered onto three-quarter inch for playback – now it is mini-DV and palm-corders, and streaming media on the web.

The core mission that drove our work 30 years ago remains the same: to ensure that everyone has access to communications technologies and a means to engage in and shape our democracy. In the meantime, everything else has changed: the regulatory, political and social environment, and of course, the technologies that we use. What is the relevance of our movement now that almost anyone CAN make media?

We need to:

- Make sure that our mission remains relevant to those who ARE making and consuming media.
- Start asking questions instead of thinking that we have all of the answers.

- Sift through the ways that we have always done things, figure out what still applies, and throw the rest away.
- Think of ourselves as more than cable channels and video production.
- Think beyond simply free speech and first-come, first-served, to identify those who have not come through our doors and those who most need our services.
- To incorporate new telecommunications technologies, as a matter of course, as soon as we figure out how they will help our communities.
- Make sure that the development of strategic alliances, locally and nationally, is as much a part of our weekly agenda as checking out equipment and programming our channels – and not wait for a crisis.
- Diversify, diversify, diversify: our mission, constituencies, programs, funding sources, and staff.

Barbara Popovic



Barbara Popovic, executive director of Chicago Access Network Television in Chicago has been involved as a public access manager in Illinois since 1985.

Barbara can be reached at bbpopovic@cantv.org

IT'S WONDERFUL TO TAKE PAUSE to do some visioning. In the two decades that I've worked in public access, we've come to know conflict, learned the value of organizing, and struggled to balance expansive missions with finite resources. We pride ourselves on getting through unscathed from year to year. Thinking about the next 30 years stretches some mental muscles that tighten like springs in the daily fray.

But while looking forward, I find myself rooted in lessons from the past. In the throes of one threat to PEG's existence, I asked the head of a government agency for help. Her response has informed my thinking for many years. She listened to my doomsday predictions, paused for a moment and then said, "What is it that you can't afford to lose? That's what you need to share with people."

What is it that we can't afford to lose?

The haunting rendition of "Strange

Fruit" sung by a local resident to accompany an unflinching program on lynching. Her 17-part series on African American history was motivated by the desire to fill a gap in her and her children's educational experience.

The excitement of an older gentleman, holding his grandson's hand, telling about coming to CAN TV afraid to even touch a computer ... how he is now the proud producer of a weekly television program for his church.

A plea from the mother of a Latino lesbian for support of our sons and daughters no matter what their preferences. A viewer called in from a place of desperation and isolation to express gratitude that the show reminded him of the importance of his well-being on a day when life had not seemed worth living.

What is it that we can't afford to lose?
The voices.

And whether it's these bills, this year, the next decade, or 30 years, it's these voices that we stand to protect.

Greg Vawter

NO ONE I KNEW THEN had ever heard of PEG access when Sue Buske hired me as educational access facilitator for Miami Valley Cable Council in September of 1978. I turned down a “real” job (for the blood bank) at twice the money to accept Sue’s CETA position (a federally funded training program, if you’re too young to remember). I did like learning production and teaching others to make video. It was fun to work with the equipment; interesting to meet the local public, educators, and government officials; and exciting to see what we could create together.

I knew right away that *community* access was a great idea, but I could never have imagined what kind of *community* access would engender. Then, I attended the second NFLCP national conference in Austin, Texas (1979) ... and every single one since. I remember colleagues driving days to get to nationals (we *all* drove

hours to regionals); others staying late – after two solid days of regional board meetings – to take turns on a computer and respond to a proposed FCC rulemaking; a wedding planned around a regional meeting so board members could attend; and of course meeting my own bride, Anne, at the Boston ’95 Alliance gathering. There are so many great memories.

After looking at the past, I might try to predict the future. But first, I want to thank each of you for the good work you are doing right now. National and state legislative battles can press in and seemingly double the daily toil, but our movement is strong and getting stronger. We are amazing people, who are fundamentally committed to democracy and passionate about giving voices to our communities. Those tenets have been *raison d’etre* for nearly 30 years and I, for one, am confident they will keep us going a while longer.



Greg Vawter is now Hillsborough County Cable Administrator in Tampa, Florida.

Greg can be reached at vawterg@mac.com

Hap Freund

IMAGINATION
Perseverance
Patience

Values:

- Free speech
- First Amendment
- Cultivating roots as community-based media

Forward thinking:

- Delivering local content to digital universe
- Grooming our successors (I will be dead by 2036)

Hap Freund started in PEG access in 1984 in Honolulu – involved in start ups there and subsequently in Ashland, OR – and served as station manager for Seattle’s government channel before he finally landed in California, where he now serves as executive director of The Santa Barbara Channels. He’s produced an investigatory documentary for NOVA and has won awards ranging from Hometown to Cable Ace. Most importantly, he’s “made friends, and felt great about his contribution to society.”



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CMR Nuggets

First NFLCP board named: Sallie E. Fischer, chairperson; Dave Bloch, vice-chairperson; Carol Brown Eilber, secretary; Manuel Gonzalez, treasurer; Sue Miller Buske, national coordinator; Jean Rice; Cathy Enlow; Robert V. Vitale; David O’Keefe; Phyllis Joffe; Lawrence E. Staab; Robert Rodriguez; Barry McQuilken.

— from NFLCP Newsletter,
Vol. 2, No. 1, September 1978



Lauren-Glenn Davitian is a founder and executive director of Burlington, VT's CCTV Center for Media & Democracy, home to Channel 17/Town Meeting Television, CyberSkills/Vermont, and CCTV Productions.

Lauren-Glenn can be reached at davitian@cctv.org

Lauren-Glenn Davitian

WHAT IS THE PLACE of public interest media in the digital age? Why should people come to community access centers when they have all the tools they need (cameras, music, editors, distribution in their desktops and mobile devices)? Why should people care about protecting public access to the public rights-of-way when they can use MySpace whenever they choose?

While the media world is rocked by internet protocols, community access must continue to promote free speech, democratic communications, public education, community building and social change. People come to us because our organizations promote and protect these core values. People come to our centers because they are more fun than sitting at home. People look forward to working with us

because we throw great parties. People participate in our online communities because they are easy to use and linked to the issues, people and places they care about. People care about protecting public access because we are able to explain why it is important in words they understand. People come to us because they can find out (from our staff and fellow producers) how to use their growing digital tool kits for changing the world.

The threats are many (from Congress, the FCC, local franchising authorities and the telecommunications industry). The opportunities are mind-boggling and hard to sort out. But if we are not working toward the goal of building a network of community members willing to defend their right to free speech, democratic communications and social change, there will be no 40th anniversary issue of *Community Media Review*.

John W. Higgins



John W. Higgins [at left, in the '70s] is an associate professor of Mass Communication at Menlo College in Atherton, CA. He has been involved in community radio since 1974 and public access/NFLCP/ACM since 1981, currently as president of the board of directors of the San Francisco Community Television Corporation.

John's website is www.mediaprof.org, and he can be reached at john@mediaprof.org

COMMUNITY MEDIA HAVE NEVER really been about tools: Television. Or radio. Or newspapers. Or film. Or the internet. Or that newfangled 3-D holographic communication system we might be using when we pull out a dusty copy of this of CMR and reread the articles in the year 2036.

Community media have always been about people: using people's stories to understand each other and ourselves better, touching and being touched by other people we're sharing space with on the planet, and using any darn technology that helps in that mission.

"Underground" newspapers in the late 1960s. Puppet shows in the early 1970s that helped pull people into local parks, where neighborhood slide shows featured residents organizing and discussing local issues. Community-oriented radio in the early 1970s. Community-based television, including public access in the early 1980s. This was my path into access, with various turns as puppeteer, station manager, board member, producer, activist, and scholar. We all share similar diverse

paths to community-based media, whether starting years ago or yesterday – drawn in by the sheer power of real people's stories, and turned off by the emptiness of the corporate media's fabricated synthetic tales.

Sure, the tech toys make it fun and different – and sometimes even make for better and easier storytelling – but the gut-grabber is the connection possible with people. We share stories and facilitate their telling through our various roles as listeners, managers, trainers, policy formulators, activists, ambassadors, missionaries, educators, and more.

This connection with people and our stories has linked U.S. access with previous people-based communication across the globe for a good many years. The people/stories connection also links us to the future: people will still connect through stories no matter what the changes in technologies.

Maybe community media is really about the technology of fire? And sitting in the dark of night around a warm, glowing space – sharing ourselves with others and feeling connected to the core of human experience?

Greg Epler-Wood

I JOINED THIS ORGANIZATION when it was only three years old. It was an immediate fit – like slipping into fuzzy slippers on a Vermont winter morning. No matter that I was in Iowa at the time and still politically and physically years away from settling here in the “people’s republic.” There was something commonsensical about putting media production tools into the hands of everyday folk, having them tell their own stories in their own words and, occasionally, being a catalyst for social change in their communities.

Already by 1979, this organization had seen at least three waves of principled and articulate pioneers wash away all the reasons why public access couldn’t work, and plant seeds of reason why it would. Those were strong shoulders upon which to stand, and, when my career prevented me from participating directly, they were the pragmatists whom I could observe as they fought the battles that built the first 100 local access centers, and the politically savvy visionaries from whom I could learn as they embedded First Amendment and localism principles into the 1984 Cable Act.

Greg Epler-Wood is a life member of the Alliance living and working in Burlington, VT as a private consultant in organizational development and public interest telecommunication policy. Engaged in the NFLCP and Alliance since 1982, Greg has served on national and regional boards and committees; planned and participated in several regional and national conferences; contributed to CMR and was chief editor of the first *Community Media Resources Directory*.

Greg can be reached at Mediavox@BurlingtonTelecom.net

Did You Know?

Cable TV evolved from Community Antenna Television (CATV) – a 12-channel service for hillside communities that shared an antenna to bring clearer network reception. It is believed that one of the earliest cable systems was set up by an enterprising TV dealer in the late 1940s or early 1950s as a ploy to encourage set sales.

In 1965, cable television served only about three percent of all U.S. homes, or about 1.57 million subscribers. Most cable systems offered only 12 channels.

In 1971, Red Burns and George Stoney were quoted in *The New York Times*: “The kind of programming sent out on cable television for the next 20 years will be determined ... in the next two or three years.” Their concern was that if people did not use the channels and time available for community programs, the channels would be used for canned shows and ‘low grade’ public service offerings.

“What is past is prologue,” wrote Shakespeare in *The Tempest*. I daresay we now live in tempestuous times when it’s imperative that we draw upon our past for strength and direction. We were in our 20s and 30s back in 1976 when we confronted far different, but equally difficult, circumstances than we do now. Are today’s 20- and 30-year olds, who are committed to free speech and social change, engaged at your PEG access center, or are they at some other venue? Are PEG access centers of today drawing strength from the past, or living in the past?

Given the elephantine policy battle going on in Washington, there is little succinct advice that 30-year veterans might offer that would directly affect our next 30 years. Nonetheless, I’d like to propose a ‘wikilist,’ seeded with action words that represent lessons learned, and to which you should add: Integrate. Converge. Flex. Persevere. Articulate. Frame. Partner. Motivate. Persuade. Dream. Learn. Listen. Lead. Lobby.

Oh yes, and one more: Change.

CMR Nuggets

City Telecommunications Regulators Form National Association

“NATOA [National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors] was formed at last October’s conference on Cable and Cities sponsored by the NFLCP and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. It was the first national gathering of local officials charged with regulating the last mile of cable.”

*from CTR, Vol. 4, No. 3,
July 1981*



— *from CTR, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 1986*



Erik Möllberg

HISTORY: We can write our own and not be relegated to the dank, darkened corners of media obscurity. Will we become a curiosity, the once “Great Social Experiment” paved over by media super stores whose bubble wrapped packs of information only reach for the lowest common denominator? We have to build community media libraries to rival the famed Alexandria, containing more than mere manuscripts and available beyond our local communities.

The possibilities surround us amid all our archives of open reel, half-inch videotape, digital storage and this very journal you are reading now. We can take our voices beyond the choir currently inside our reach via cable television. Within the potential petabytes of hard drives and materials scattered around media centers are a plethora of

physical and virtual collective memories of cultures, peoples and actions for these many generations. Imagine the discussions, theses and position papers 30 years from now, if, at all universities, students of communication could be studying the words and actions of community media activists and populations striving to maintain their communal identities much in the way we in our time studied Paulo Freire, Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas.

We held the vision of a changed world that is always changing. The public sphere can be re-born in a flash of bits, podcasts and mov files that delve into the world in ways that more traditional media never could or has. We created “open spaces” of communication for those subscribed on that coax cable. To assure our future and our past, we’ll need to open our archives and ourselves to the academic world and beyond.

Erik Möllberg served on the Alliance for Community Media national board as Central States regional chair from 1996 to 2001. Prior to serving as regional chair, he was regional board secretary, public policy chair, and Indiana Chapter chair from 1989. He has been a member of the Alliance for Community Media since 1984, and received the Buske Leadership Award in 2002.

Erik began his access career in 1982 (washing into town during Fort Wayne’s flood) as a volunteer at Public Access Channel 10 in Fort Wayne, IN and was hired a year later. He worked as a “stringer” for several corporate video productions companies while attending Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, and his first immersion in television began in 1975 at NBC affiliate WNDU-TV doing a comedy show in South Bend, IN. Eric can be reached at emollberg@acpl.info

Kari Peterson

OUR MOVEMENT HAS AGED a generation and a half since it started in the ’70s, and our leadership has aged along with the movement. It’s time for us Boomers to step aside, or at least make room for the next generation to infuse the movement with new energy.

At a recent board retreat, out of 13 in attendance, 12 were Boomers. We’re still deeply committed to the mission of community-based media, but I believe many of us are out of touch with today’s media culture. We were talking new technologies, sure, but in the context of old constructs.

Enter the Millennial Generation. These guys relate to media differently. For them, media is an essential element, like air. It permeates everything, transcending borders and schedules. They commune in Second Life. They IM, blog and podcast as second nature. They have ready access to media at all times. They make 3-minute vid-

eblogs with credit card-sized cameras and send them to their friends over the internet; they aren’t going to come to an access center to learn how to make TV shows of a predetermined length that will air on a cable tv channel at an appointed time with three repeats.

Which means community media needs to rethink its role going forward because I don’t think we’re going to be serving up cable TV shows. More than that, we need to be able to connect very directly to a generation that is redefining our media culture by revolutionizing the way media is made and shared.

Certainly, our work is not about technology. But to have an impact on today’s world, to realize our mission of democratic communication and social change, we have to understand how these new tools can be used to best effect. We need to make room for leadership that understands and can adapt these new digital tools, and shape and implement the media center of the future ... even if that means stepping aside.



Kari Peterson was founding executive director of Davis Community Television in California, a position she held for over 20 years. She has served on both Alliance national and regional boards. Presently, she is working as a consultant on projects related to examining the future of community media and just completed co-editing *Community Media Review’s* “On Beyond Access,” a look at the future of PEGs and CMCs. Kari can be reached at kapeters@dcn.org

IF GEORGE STONEY IS THE FATHER OF ACCESS, then surely Jim Horwood is its Godfather. Sixteen years ago, he stepped into the board role of confidant, counselor, *consigliere*. He has been the steady rock of the organization through good times and tough.

Jim has literally donated years of pro bono work on behalf of the Alliance as an organization, as well as to our individual members on matters both large and small. It is impossible to list all of the Alliance legal cases and policy work which bear his mark, but they include:

- 1994 Cable Act draft
- 1996 Cable Act
- ACLU vs. Denver
- The 2006 Telecom rewrite
- Countless briefs
- Controversial programming issues too salacious to mention here ...

Jim brings with him the goodwill of others who also deserve many thanks:

- His firm, Spiegel & McDiarmid, the staff of which tolerates our incessant calling, as well as the towering stacks of Alliance-related documents covering the table in his office.
- Tim Lay, the brilliant young legal mind who is often the source of policy analysis (Tim is a relatively young 52 ...).
- And, of course, Jim's wonderful wife, Marilyn. She has not only sacrificed many of her hours with Jim by permitting him to work with us, but has opened both her heart and home to our board year after year.

It is also clear that Jim has loaned the Alliance his credibility. Many times, it would have been easy for others to have dismissed the Alliance as wild-eyed radicals – Jeffersonian radicals, though we may be – had Jim not been beside us with his wire-rimmed glasses and classic legal briefcase.



Jim has run miles with us when we all could run. He has body-surfed with us in rough water. He has bought us all a round of beer right when we really needed it. He has helped us to feel excited about staying up all night writing and re-writing the few simple words upon which would turn the future speech of a nation. Jim defines “quiet passion.” His commitment to a cause and his efforts to see it through are total, yet always polite and gentle.

Jim has been the sole cause of, and is subject to, at least one policy rule of the Alliance board –

The Horwood Rule: Jim cannot leave the board, we pray, until Access is permanently safe from all legal and regulatory attack.

Jim, we all look forward to sharing your friendship and your gravelly-whispered dry wit for years to come.

The Last Word

Award Winners

GEORGE STONEY AWARD FOR HUMANISTIC COMMUNICATION

1980 – Sue Miller Buske	1995 – Tremeleau County Cable Commission
1981 – Jean Rice	1996 – Shea & Gardner
1982 – Reverend Everett Parker	1997 – Eric Barnouw
1983 – Diana Peck	1998 – Tony Riddle and Paula Manley
1984 – Roxie Cole	1999 – Sheriff B.J. Barnes
1985 – Nicholas Johnson	2000 – Dirk Koning
1986 – Eugene Shirk	2001 – The City of Brunswick and Brunswick Township, OH
1987 – Tom Borrup	2002 – The City of McMinnville, OR
1988 – Michael Myerson	2003 – Wanda Baer
1989 – Alternative Views	2004 – Homer Baldwin and Amy Goodman
1990 – The Benton Foundation	2005 – Reclaim the Media and Fred Cohen
1991 – Dee Dee Halleck	2006 – Sam Behrend
1992 – Herb Schiller	
1993 – Joe Van Eaton and Bob Devine	
1994 – Alan Dachman	

BUSKE LEADERSHIP AWARD

1987 – Sue Miller Buske	1997 – Carl Kucharski
1988 – Jan Leshner Ireland	1998 – Steve Fortriede
1989 – Dirk Koning	1999 – Deb Vinsel
1990 – Chuck Sherwood	2000 – Alan Bushong
1991 – Gerry Field	2001 – John Donovan
1992 – Sharon Ingraham	2002 – Eric Möllberg
1993 – Lynn Carillo-Cruz	2003 – Ron Cooper
1994 – Andrew Blau	2004 – Harry “Hap” Haasch
1995 – Rika Welsh	2005 – Brian Wilson
1996 – Hubert Jessup	2006 – Sean McLaughlin

JEWELL RYAN-WHITE CULTURAL DIVERSITY AWARD

1993 – Jewell Ryan-White	2000 – Ben and Sue Charles
1994 – Curtis Henderson	2001 – Azaka Ajanaku
1995 – Maggie Johnson-Reese	2002 – Onida Coward-Mayers
1996 – Rick Maultra	2003 – Tarek Bagdadi
1997 – Fernando Moreno	2004 – Thenmozhi Sondararajan
1998 – CeCe Pinheiro	2005 – Malkia Cyril
1999 – Richard Turner	2006 – Edmund Broussard



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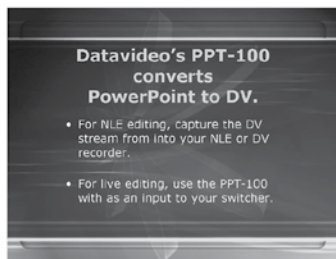
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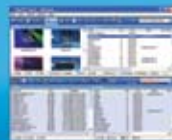
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Paul Congo, Executive Director of Access Monterey Peninsula, has spent over 25 years involved in community access television, and along the way, he learned what it takes to succeed in this broadcast field.

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